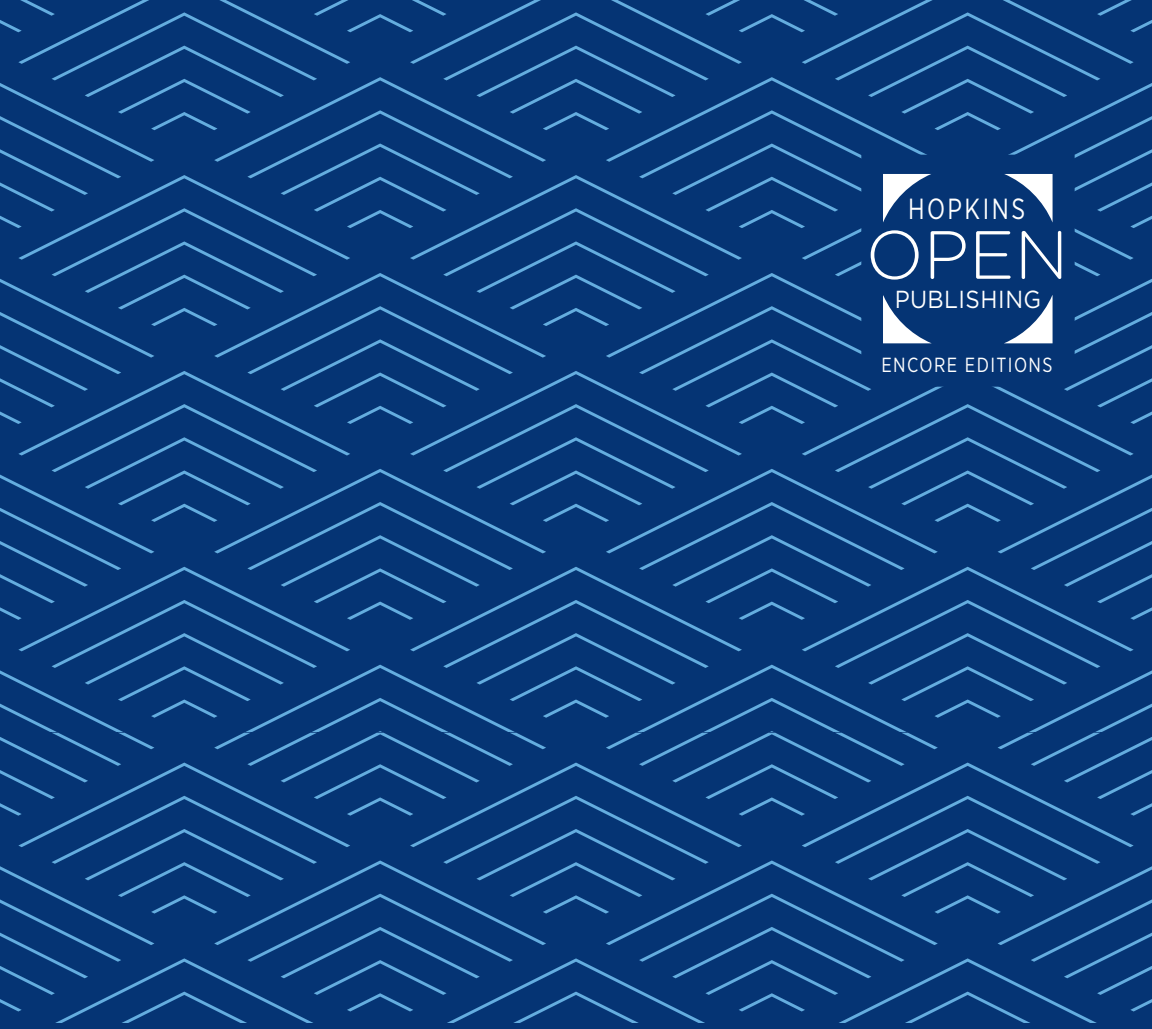

Ludwell H. Johnson

Red River Campaign

Politics and Cotton in the Civil War

VISIT…

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Red River Campaign:

POLITICS AND COTTON IN THE CIVIL WAR

Red River Campaign * POLITICS AND COTTON IN THE CIVIL WAR

BY LUDWELL H. JOHNSON

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Foreword

*

THE WRITER HOPES that this study has accomplished several purposes. First, the Red River expedition should help to illustrate the fact that the campaigns of the Civil War often sprang from a complex set of circumstances sometimes wholly nonmilitary in nature. It is in the origins of campaigns that the forces causing and sustaining a war frequently become apparent. Second, the military history of the war west of the Mississippi has been very much neglected, and this study is designed to fill one of the larger gaps. The third purpose has been the solution of an intricate and not unimportant problem that caused considerable stir in its day: the question of cotton dealings and speculations in Louisiana during the spring of 1864, especially those connected with the Red River expedition. And it is also hoped that this narrative may provide additional insight into the characters of some of the period's leading figures.

A word of explanation concerning some of the maps is in order. Due to the inadequacy of contemporary maps, both in number and quality, troop positions in the sketches illustrating the engagements at Sabine Crossroads, Pleasant Hill, and Monett's Ferry are approximate only; this is especially true of Sabine Crossroads. In some instances movements and positions were reconstructed from written reports. However, guesswork was held to an absolute minimum; the maps in question are believed to be reasonably accurate in all essential details.

*

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*

NO WRITER can ever make a complete acknowledgment of the courtesies and assistance he has received in the course of his work; he can only mention the persons and institutions to whom he feels most indebted.

I would especially like to thank Professors C. Vann Woodward and Charles Barker of The Johns Hopkins University, who read the entire manuscript and offered helpful criticisms. My wife, Pamela C. Johnson, did likewise and in addition proofread the final draft of the manuscript, besides putting up with the usual domestic disarray that accompanies writing. Miss Lily Lavarello helped to type an earlier version of the manuscript and was of much assistance. Many libraries were very helpful in facilitating my research, and I am particularly grateful to The Johns Hopkins library, the Division of Manuscripts of the Library of Congress, the University of North Carolina Library, and the library of the University of Texas. Reproduction of the maps was financed by a loan-grant from the Research Council of Florida State University. They were drawn by Mr. John Spurbeck.

Numerous authors and publishers were generous in permitting me to quote copyrighted material. I would especially like to mention Mr. Richard B. Harwell and Longmans, Green & Co., who permitted me to use many quotations from Richard Taylor's *Destruction and Reconstruction;* Mr. Harwell is the

editor of the new 1955 edition of that valuable work. I am likewise grateful to Professor David Donald for permission to use material that appears in his new edition of Salmon P. Chase's diary entitled *Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1954). The full extent of my obligation to authors and publishers can be seen by reference to the footnotes and bibliography.

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Red River Campaign:

POLITICS AND COTTON IN THE CIVIL WAR

CHAPTER I

*

Genesis of the Campaign

*

WHEN THE LINCOLN ADMINISTRATION set about the task of suppressing the Confederacy, it soon discovered that there was more than one way to prosecute a war and that the good or ill fortunes of various commercial and political interests depended on which methods and policies were selected. As a result, lobbyists and politicians converged on Washington, each of them having his pet general to be appointed, a particular firm to be given a government contract, or a favorite campaign to be undertaken. High-pressure advice came from manufacturers, from state governors, and from within Lincoln's own cabinet. It was in this sort of hectic atmosphere that the President had to reach the most vital decisions affecting the conduct of the war.

On some occasions Lincoln perhaps did not clearly recognize the nature of the forces pressing for this or that policy; at other times he obviously did. At any event, there were times when the decisions that were finally reached bore little or no relation to the desire of the vast majority of the people for the shortest and least costly war possible, and the general welfare was sacrificed to special interests. This was especially true of Lincoln's ideas concerning trading with the enemy, ideas that sometimes sound strange indeed.[1] The unusual trading privi-

[1] A good example is the following excerpt from a letter Lincoln wrote to Major General E. R. S. Canby, Dec. 14, 1864: "As to cotton. By the external blockade, the

leges granted to various individuals by the President are difficult to justify on the grounds of an effective prosecution of the war.[2] Such things, however, do not necessarily impugn the integrity of Lincoln or his advisers. A sincere conviction that the only salvation of the country lay in the continued ascendancy of the Republican party could easily lead to acts that, while they strengthened that party, might seriously impede the progress of the war. Political undertones of this nature were present in the removal from command of such men as McClellan, Buell, and Fitz-John Porter, as well as in the appointment or retention of political generals like Ben Butler, John Pope, Frémont, N. P. Banks, and others. Party politics sometimes dictated routes of invasion and areas to be occupied as well as the choice of generals.[3] Favored individuals, including personal friends of the President, were allowed to trade with the enemy.[4] Lincoln may have yielded to such pressure

price is made certainly six times as great as it was. And yet the enemy gets through at least one sixth part as much in a given period, say a year, as if there were no blockade, and receives as much for it, as he would for a full crop in time of peace. The effect in substance is, that we give him six ordinary crops, without the trouble of producing any but the first; and at the same time leave his fields and his laborers free to produce provisions. You know how this keeps up his armies at home, and procures supplies from abroad. For other reasons we cannot give up the blockade, and hence it becomes immensely important to us to get the cotton away from him. Better give him guns for it, than let him, as now, get both guns and ammunition for it." Roy P. Basler and others, eds., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, 1953), VIII, 163–64. Canby, like many other high-ranking officers, objected to the widespread trade with the Confederates. Lincoln's views can be traced to an interview he had with Edward Atkinson in July. (John T. Morse, ed., *The Diary of Gideon Welles* [New York and Boston, 1911], II, 66; Harold F. Williamson, *Edward Atkinson: The Biography of an American Liberal 1827–1905* [Boston, 1934], pp. 13–14.) Atkinson was a spokesman for New England textile interests; see below, pp. 7–9.

[2] For example, see Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VIII, 200–201 (*re* James Singleton *et al.*); for another case see *ibid.,* VII, 488–89 (Lincoln to Canby, Aug. 9, 1864) and VIII, 103 (to Farragut, Nov. 11, 1864); Morse, ed., *Welles Diary,* II, 159–60, 167. For another, see below, pp. 71–73.

[3] T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals* (Madison, 1941), pp. 183–96, 224–26; Benjamin P. Thomas, *Abraham Lincoln: A Biography* (New York, 1952), pp. 292–93; Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* V, 295.

[4] See note 2 above.

for the sake of the Republican party and the Union. As always, the question of motivation is obscure. Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that Lincoln was a man who often found it hard to say no.

Since the campaigns of the Civil War evolved from sources considerably more complicated than Napoleon's *Maxims,* no account of military events is complete unless it contains some cognizance of underlying causes, those causes that constitute the "secret history" of any war. And possibly no campaign of the war sprang from a more complex series of events than did the Federal invasion of Northwest Louisiana, the Red River expedition. While it lasted only from March 12 to May 20, 1864, in reality this expedition represented the culmination of political, economic, ideological, and diplomatic pressures, some of which had been at work even before the war itself began. Here may be a test case, so to speak, illustrating the nature of the forces that found their ultimate expression on battlefields from Gettysburg to Galveston.

One of the purposes of the Red River expedition was the invasion of Texas, and it is with the annexation of that state in 1845 that this story begins. Annexation was regarded by anti-slavery men in the North as another stunning victory for what they looked upon as a sinister conspiracy of slaveowners. Edward Everett Hale, who was in Washington when the joint resolution annexing Texas was passed, returned to his home in New England and immediately wrote and published a pamphlet entitled "How to Conquer Texas before Texas Conquers Us," in which he advocated the prompt settlement of the state by Northerners in order to smother slavery by weight of numbers. In itself Hale's effort was of little or no importance, for it had only a handful of readers, but it was prophetic in concept. Nine years later, when the Kansas controversy burst upon the nation, a Worcester schoolteacher and neighbor of Hale's named Eli Thayer organized the Massachu-

setts Emigrant Aid Society for the purpose of stopping the spread of slavery by flooding Kansas territory with Northern settlers.[5]

Hale's ideas with respect to Texas were thus applied to Kansas with considerable success. But the aggressive colonizing instincts of the Emigrant Aid Societies were not confined in ambition to the borders of Kansas, although that state continued to occupy the center of the stage, and acquisitive glances were cast toward the great domain of the Southwest: Texas. The appearance in 1857 of *A Journey Through Texas,* Fred Olmsted's account of his most recent peregrinations, created much interest in New England. Here before the eyes of fervent Puritan crusaders lay perhaps a more magnificent opportunity for the exercise of their talents than even "Bleeding Kansas" afforded. The antislavery German minority of western Texas, raising their cotton without using slaves, presented an appealing picture.[6] In reviewing the book a famous Boston publication observed that "a great future is in store for that region if by any means it can be saved from the blight of slavery."[7]

For several years, in fact, Olmsted had been in contact with such men as W. H. Seward, Hale, the Fourierist Victor Considerant, Adolf Douai, the antislavery editor of the San Antonio *Zeitung,* and various Emigrant Aid Society friends, all with the purpose of getting free-soil settlers into western Texas. In 1857 he distributed copies of his *Journey Through Texas* to Samuel Gridley Howe, Theodore Parker, John G. Whittier, Edmund Quincy, and others, and made excerpts available in pamphlet form. Warm editorial support came from the *New York Times,* and Olmsted extended his propagandizing even

[5] Edward E. Hale, *Memories of a Hundred Years* (New York, 1904), II, 151–55.

[6] George W. Smith, "The Banks Expedition of 1862," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly,* XXVI (1943), 342. For a comment on this valuable article, see the Bibliography, p. 305 below.

[7] *North American Review,* LXXXIV (1857), 565–66.

to the Cotton Supply Associations of Manchester and Liverpool. In 1858, however, personal difficulties forced Olmsted to turn his attention to other matters,[8] but by that time the idea of a free-soil cotton-growing colony in Texas had gained considerable currency in the Northeast, particularly New York and New England.

As a consequence there was a continuing interest in the next few years in establishing a Northern outpost in Sam Houston's state. In 1861 Edward Atkinson, a supporter of the Kansas crusade and a rising figure in the New England mill industry,[9] published a pamphlet entitled "Cheap Cotton by Free Labor," containing ideas earlier publicized by Olmsted. Here Atkinson proposed the transformation of Southern agriculture by settling Texas with Northern free labor. Under this system, he said, Texas could produce three times the normal amount of cotton grown by the entire South, thus driving the old slave states from the market and forcing them to abandon the peculiar institution as economically unsound. "The law of competition is inexorable," said Atkinson.

> Have not the business men of the country a right to claim that, by free labor, the price of cotton be kept at that point at which while yielding to the cultivator a large profit, the country can retain its control of the markets of Europe, and so maintain our export trade and keep the balance in our favor? Have not our soldiers a right to demand as their best compensation for subduing the rebellion, that at least one small portion [!] of the country which they will restore to the Union shall be kept open to them for peaceful occupation? . . . The question may well be asked . . . whether the confiscation of the lands of all rebels—individuals and states[10]—and the bestowal of them as a bounty to our soldiers is not a necessary step in

[8] Laura W. Roper, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Western Texas Free-Soil Movement," *American Historical Review,* LVI (1950–51), 58–64. See also F. L. Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas* (New York, 1857), pp. 140–41, 172–83, 358–60, 414–15, 428–41.

[9] Williamson, *Edward Atkinson,* pp. 3–4.

[10] Public lands in Texas belonged to the state.

that reconstruction of southern society which must be accomplished, to render the reconstruction of the Union solid and enduring.[11]

Atkinson's pamphlet was favorably received by Northern newspapers and public men. Late in 1861 the Springfield *National Republican* remarked editorially that Atkinson had treated the subject "from the point of view of his business as a consumer of cotton, and the considerations which he presents are entitled to have and will have great weight in forming public opinion on standing questions." [12] Even the London *Spectator* noticed and commented favorably on the pamphlet.[13] George S. Boutwell, prominent Massachusetts politician, was much taken by the young man's ideas. Probably they were also congenial to Amos Lawrence, famous Bay State textile magnate and Emigrant Aider, who came to believe that because of the "obstinacy of the rebels" it would be necessary to "ruin them completely and settle their lands with Yankees." [14] Late in 1861 and early in 1862 Atkinson began trying to promote a military expedition to Texas, corresponding with, among others, Dwight Foster, Attorney General of Massachusetts,[15] and Senator Charles Sumner. In May he traveled to Washington to urge that an army of colonization be sent to Texas, but

[11] Edward Atkinson, "Cheap Cotton by Free Labor" (2d ed.; Boston, 1861), pp. 25, 27, 50. Atkinson's comments on the fate of the slaves who would be freed are interesting: "[For the ex-slave] labor or starvation would be his only choice, and . . . labor upon the cotton field would be the easiest and most profitable in which he could engage;—[if he will not work] let him starve and exterminate himself if he will, and so remove the negro question,—still we must raise cotton." *Ibid.*, p. 6. Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.*, p. 343, outlines this pamphlet.

[12] Williamson, *Edward Atkinson*, p. 7.

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 7 n.

[14] Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.*, pp. 343, 345.

[15] Jessie A. Marshall, ed., *Public and Private Correspondence of Gen. Benjamin F. Butler During the Period of the Civil War* (Norwood, Mass., 1917), II, 284–85; Robert N. Scott, chief compiler, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1880–1901), Series III, I, 833. Cited hereafter as *O. R.* All references will be to Series I unless otherwise indicated.

was unable to secure any immediate action. His pamphlet having sold well, Atkinson further amplified his ideas in magazine and newspaper articles.[16]

In the meantime, the attention of other men was being attracted by the broad fields west of the Sabine. Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, received a letter from one of his friends advising the organization of an expeditionary force of Germans in order to rescue their countrymen in western Texas from Confederate rule. Postmaster General Montgomery Blair favored the occupation of the state as the best means of forestalling "the darling scheme of the disunionists," the conquest of Mexico.[17] On August 2, 1861, Major General George B. McClellan submitted to President Lincoln a memorandum embodying his views on the larger strategical policies that he believed the United States should adopt. Among these he mentioned a "movement that has often been suggested and which always recommended itself to my judgment. I refer to a movement . . . upon Red River and Western Texas for the purpose of protecting and developing the latent Union and free-state sentiment well-known to predominate in Western Texas. . . ." [18]

These prominent advocates of an attack on Texas were soon joined by one whose voice may have carried considerable weight with a new and somewhat unstable administration, Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts. In a letter that strongly suggests the influence of Atkinson's "Cheap Cotton by Free Labor," Andrew told Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox that the wisdom of an early attack on Texas had been pressed upon his notice "By some of our most practical, experienced, and influential business men," a proposition

[16] Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.*, p. 344; Williamson, *Edward Atkinson*, p. 9.

[17] Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.*, p. 341.

[18] George B. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story* (New York, 1887), pp. 103–104.

that he could not but regard "with much favor." Among other advantages, he wrote, the occupation of the state would "open a way out for cotton" and would result in filling Texas with a "European emigration, which will demonstrate, as the Germans of Texas are doing, that cotton can be raised without slaves, though hired negroes may be used.... These points are urged, not in the interests of Abolitionists, but by the leading commercial men and capitalists...." [19] The seeds sown by Olmsted were beginning to germinate.

On December 2, 1861, five days after Governor Andrew penned his letter to Fox, another powerful Bay State politician added his voice to those favoring a Texas expedition. This was Major General Benjamin F. Butler, who before many months had passed was to win a unique place in Southern opinion and folklore. Butler, at that time commanding the Department of New England with headquarters at Boston, wrote to McClellan urging that an expedition of 15,000 New England troops under Butler's command be allowed to make a descent on the Texas coast, and he outlined his plan of attack and the results he expected to achieve.[20] Although he evidently did not receive any definite reply to his proposals, Butler had good reason for not abandoning his ambition to lead a southern expedition. He had come to be on the most intimate terms with Edwin M. Stanton,[21] Lincoln's new Secretary of War, and at a Sunday morning breakfast at Stanton's house on January 19 the two men discussed the matter. The plan of campaign that they considered called for a landing at Indianola by Butler's forces, which would then penetrate to San Antonio, arm the German population, and dramatically detach Texas from the Confederacy. While Butler was driving from the coast, another col-

[19] *O. R.,* XV, 412. As had Atkinson, Andrew also advocated a railroad through Texas to the Gulf, with its northern terminus at St. Joseph, Missouri.

[20] *Ibid.,* LIII, 507–509.

[21] Marshall, ed., *Butler Correspondence,* I, 323.

umn under "Bloody Jim" Lane of Kansas would push down from the north.[22] In deciding on this program of operations it is possible that Butler and Stanton were influenced by information concerning what was known as the Conspiracy of the Peace Party in northern Texas. This secret Unionist underground movement, which was getting into full swing at about this time, had as one of its plans co-operation with two Federal armies, which, it was hoped, would invade the state simultaneously, one from the coast and one from the north.[23]

Probably neither Butler nor Stanton knew at this time that an expedition to the Gulf of Mexico had been in the making for two months. On November 12, Commander David D. Porter had come to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles with a plan for the speedy capture of New Orleans. When Porter had explained his project, Welles took him to see Lincoln, before whom the commander again outlined his recommendations. The President was much impressed with the strategic importance of such a move and remarked that the attempt should have been made much sooner.[24] McClellan was consulted, and within two days Lincoln was notified that a plan of campaign had been formulated and that the troops for the expedition could be embarked by the middle of January.[25] Because of previous information leaks, the preparations for this undertaking were not at that time revealed to the War Department, then presided over by Simon Cameron.[26]

[22] Memorandum dated Jan. 19, 1862, Edwin M. Stanton Papers, Division of Manuscripts. Library of Congress; cf. Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.*, pp. 341–42. The writer was led to this memorandum by Smith's article.

[23] Claude Elliott, "Union Sentiment in Texas 1861–1865," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, L (1946–47), 453–55.

[24] Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, 1887–88), II, 23–25. See also David D. Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes of the Civil War* (New York, 1891), pp. 63–66.

[25] Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders*, II, 24–25; R. S. West Jr., *The Second Admiral, a Life of David Dixon Porter 1813–1891* (New York, 1937), pp. 114–16.

[26] Morse, ed., *Welles Diary*, I, 60.

These events had of course transpired before the breakfast conference between Butler and Stanton, who did not take office until January 15, 1862.[27] On the 24th, five days after his meeting with Butler, Stanton wrote McClellan and asked his opinion as to whether "the expedition proposed by General B. F. Butler shall be prosecuted, abandoned, or modified, and in what manner." [28] Since November McClellan had been at least partially committed to an assault on New Orleans, and in his reply to Stanton he gave it as his decided opinion that if any movement to the Gulf were made it should have as its object the capture of that city. But, he continued, at the present time he did not approve of such a venture because troops could not be spared from operations in Virginia.[29] Actually McClellan's opposition sprang in some degree from the fact that he wanted to lead the attack on New Orleans himself as soon as it was possible for him to leave Virginia. "I will knock them to pieces at New Orleans," he told a correspondent of a New York newspaper.[30] To Butler, the "report by McClellan *against* my *expedition*" was a rude jolt, but Ben was too highly connected to be thwarted in this matter, and as he told his wife, "by dint of hard work and personal exertion I have got that matter overruled. . . ." [31] Late in January the cabinet, against the wishes of McClellan, decided to set Butler afloat with an expedition to the Gulf.[32] His destination, however, was New Orleans, not Texas; evidently McClellan had pre-

[27] George C. Gorham, *The Life and Public Services of Edwin M. Stanton* (New York and Boston, 1899), I, 238.

[28] *O. R.*, VI, 677.

[29] *Ibid.*, 677–78.

[30] Malcolm Ives to James Gordon Bennett, Jan. 15, 1862, James Gordon Bennett Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress; also printed in "Federal Generals and a Good Press," *American Historical Review*, XXXIX (1933–34), 285–90.

[31] Marshall, ed., *Butler Correspondence*, I, 331.

[32] S. P. Hanscom to Bennett [?], Feb. 4, 1862, Bennett Papers.

vailed to that extent. Butler would have preferred, it is true, to go to Texas, but the present undertaking also held promise of glory and reputation.[33] A thorough opportunist, he was quick to seize any means to blazon his name before the public eye.

As the year 1862 wore on, the textile mills of the Northeast began to feel the real pinch of the cotton shortage, and the situation of the manufacturers of cotton products threatened to become ruinous. By the first day of June, 3,252,000 of 4,745,750 spindles were motionless. A month later only about twenty-five per cent of all spindles were operating, a drop of seven per cent in thirty days.[34] Contrary to the administration's hopes, the occupation of New Orleans had produced only an insignificant amount of cotton. Some 27,000 bales were exported from that city in the year ending September 1, 1862, as compared to almost 2,000,000 bales the preceding year.[35]

Matters continued to grow worse. Where could cotton be obtained? The only real alternative source of supply was India, but of course Lancashire monopolized its output. Efforts to raise the plant in Illinois met with moderate success, but the quantities of cotton involved were negligible.[36] There seemed to be only one real chance to set the mills going again: the conquest of Texas. The *New York Times* took up the question editorially and advocated a military expedition to take the state. "Texas alone is capable," the paper said, "by the proper application of free labor . . . of producing more cotton annually than all the South ever exported by the aid of its four

[33] Cf. a memorandum by B. F. Butler dated Jan. 1862, Stanton Papers.

[34] Edward Atkinson, "Report to the Boston Board of Trade" (pamphlet; n. p., n. d.), pp. 2–4.

[35] *De Bow's Review,* II (Revised Series, 1866), 419.

[36] *New York Times,* Oct. 23, 1862; Boston *Pilot,* Nov. 22, 1862.

million slaves." [37] Late in October the problem took on additional urgency when there came a boast from England that its mills could now be supplied with cotton independently of the American crop. The *Times* was "startled" by this declaration, and took occasion "to urge our government to the most vigorous measures for the encouragement of cotton culture on lands under the national control. Texas, Florida and Arkansas are magnificent fields for cotton growing, and they might all be made available for this purpose." [38]

That same month a delegation of Bostonians representing all New England manufacturers, and enjoying the support of Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, journeyed to Washington to press for the speedy occupation of Texas in order to "obtain a supply of cotton." There they met a subcommittee of the National War Committee, which seems to have been an unofficial affiliate of the New York Chamber of Commerce. It was headed by John Austin Stevens, Jr., secretary of the Chamber of Commerce and a warm supporter of Secretary of the Treasury Chase. Stevens and his friends were in Washington on a mission similar to that of the Bostonians. In September the National War Committee had been petitioned by a number of prominent refugee Unionists from Texas to use its influence to reclaim the state, and as a result the Stevens subcommittee was sent to the capital.[39] Surrounding circumstances, however, make it seem likely that Stevens and his backers were much more interested in Texas cotton than Texas Unionists.

When Stevens got to Washington he called on his friend Chase and asked him to speak with a man who was second to none in his desire to see Texas occupied by Federal troops.

[37] *New York Times,* Oct. 8, 1862.

[38] *Ibid.,* Oct. 23, 1862.

[39] New York *Tribune,* Feb. 7, 1863; the writer was led to this item by Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.,* pp. 341–42; *New York Times,* Oct. 9, 1862; Boston *Daily Courier,* Oct. 15, 1862; New York *Weekly Herald,* Oct. 18, 1862.

This was Andrew Jackson Hamilton, an influential Texas Unionist who had a highly complimentary letter of introduction from George S. Denison, Chase's young kinsman and collector of internal revenue at New Orleans.[40] Such a figure as Hamilton could not but appeal to an old Free-Soiler like Chase, so he invited both men to dinner. They duly appeared at the Secretary's home on Sunday, October 5; by a coincidence Stanton happened to drop by, and he joined the others at the table. After the meal was finished, Hamilton poured out his tale of woe to his sympathetic listeners. He described how he had escaped his Confederate enemies by hiding out in the woods, and he pictured the unfortunate condition of loyal Unionists who were still hiding there in the vastnesses of western Texas. He called the war "a war of the oligarchy upon the people—that slavery was the basis of the oligarchy, but that the perpetuation of slavery was not more their object, than the despotic power of the class over the mass." [41] There can be little doubt that Hamilton did not stint his eloquence or understate his case in attempting to impress his audience with the need for restoring his state to Federal control. "I entered fully into his feelings," Chase wrote in his diary, "and promised to go with him to the President's tomorrow." [42]

On Monday Chase saw both Hamilton and Lincoln and made arrangements for an interview. Two days later Stevens' committee, accompanied by Edward Lee Plumb, an authority on Mexican affairs, Hamilton, and a number of other exiled Texans called on the Secretary of War. Stanton listened to the Texans' anxious plea and conceded the importance of occupy-

[40] "The Diary and Correspondence of Salmon P. Chase," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association . . . 1902,* II, 101, 314–15; Denison to Chase, Sept. 19, 1862 (two letters), Salmon P. Chase Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Denison was later special agent of the Treasury Department.

[41] "Chase Diary and Correspondence," p. 101; Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.,* pp. 348–49.

[42] *Ibid.* Chase had been rather fully informed on Texas matters by Denison, who had lived in the state.

ing the state. But, he told them, at the present time he did not see how the troops necessary for the undertaking could be spared. The next day the Stevens group went to see Lincoln, who raised the same objection: the men could not be spared. To the rejoinder that new troops would be specially raised for the expedition, the President replied that this would still deplete the manpower reserves upon which he expected to draw for other purposes. But when the Texans assured him that only 5000 men would be needed, Lincoln began to weaken. He promised, the committee reported later, "to examine the subject in this light, and evidently felt a disposition to grant the authority for such an expedition." [43]

The committee then visited Secretary of State Seward, whom they found willing to use his influence to secure the occupation of Texas.[44] For some time past, in fact, Seward had been urging the occupation of at least the Rio Grande.[45] Montgomery Blair told them that he had been recommending such a move for over a year. Chase, who had fallen ill, was not available, but of course his views were known to Stevens and Hamilton.[46] So while the committee had not immediately realized its purpose, it had made progress, and according to Greeley's *Tribune* it was soon "rewarded with the distinct promise of an expedition at an early day for the relief of Texas." [47]

[43] New York *Tribune,* Feb. 7, 1863; "Chase Diary and Correspondence," p. 102.

[44] New York *Tribune,* Feb. 7, 1863.

[45] *O. R.,* XV, 522; Series III, I, 870–71, II, 175, 949; Elliott, "Union Sentiment in Texas," *Sw. Hist. Qrly.,* p. 459. Seward's main reasons for wanting Federal troops in Texas seem to have been (1) to forestall Confederate attack on Mexico; (2) to prevent occupation of Matamoras by European powers; (3) to disrupt Confederate trade with Mexico; (4) to rescue the Texas Unionists.

[46] New York *Tribune,* Feb. 7, 1863.

[47] *Ibid.* (editorial). On October 10 Stevens and the others addressed a formal statement of their aims to Lincoln. Among other things, they stated that if the loyalists of Texas "could be positively assured of the assistance of the Federal Government, large numbers would immediately flock to the . . . old flag . . . [Texas'] agricultural capacity . . . will be amazing—its soil being eminently

In this way demands for the invasion of Texas continued to accumulate in numbers and importance. Not only was Lincoln being pushed by representatives of the textile interests, by such important political figures as the governor of Massachusetts, but also by three of the four most important members of his cabinet: Blair, Chase, and Seward. Moreover the exiled Texans such as Hamilton began to win important backers. They came frequently before the public eye and created considerable interest in their cause.

As a result, the administration found itself confronted by a dilemma. This body of opinion emanating from these politically weighty individuals could not simply be ignored. On the other hand it was becoming increasingly apparent to Lincoln that the overriding object of the war in the West was the opening of the Mississippi. Shrewd old Winfield Scott had so advised the President soon after Sumter.[48] Lincoln himself had called the Mississippi the "backbone of the Rebellion." From a military point of view, were not troops needed far more for that purpose than for the conquest of Texas? But entirely aside from military considerations, there were potent political reasons why the Mississippi had to be wrested from the Confederates.

Although railroads from the East had diverted to the Atlantic much of the western export traffic that used to leave the country by way of the Mississippi and New Orleans, the river was still of vital importance to those who dwelt on its watershed as a means of conducting interstate trade of great

adapted, not only for grain, but for Cotton and Sugar." The danger of French intervention in Mexico was also pointed out. The statement concluded by saying that "the Great Empire State of New York is pledged" to this undertaking. John A. Stevens, Jr., Hiram Walbridge, and others to Lincoln, Oct. 10, 1862, Robert Todd Lincoln Collection, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. Cited hereafter as Lincoln Papers.

[48] Charles W. Elliott, *Winfield Scott, the Soldier and the Man* (New York, 1937), pp. 721–24.

value to their economic well-being. This was particularly true of the southern sections of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, whose trade, unlike the northern parts of those states, was mainly with the South.[49] Even before the war began there was much fear both north and south of the Ohio that secession would mean the interruption of this trade. The apprehensions of the Northwest were well expressed by Governor Richard Yates of Illinois, who put the question to his legislature:

> Can it be for a moment supposed that the people of the valley of the Mississippi will ever consent that the great river shall flow for hundreds of miles through a foreign jurisdiction, and they be compelled, if not to fight their way in the face of the forts frowning upon its banks, to submit to the imposition and annoyance of arbitrary taxes and exorbitant duties to be levied upon their commerce? . . . I know I speak for Illinois, and I believe for the Northwest, when I declare them a unit, in the unalterable determination of her millions, occupying the great basin drained by the Mississippi, to permit no portion of that stream to be controlled by a foreign jurisdiction.[50]

War inevitably disrupted the Mississippi trade. The economic and political pressure generated by the blocking of the West's natural channel of commerce mounted dangerously,

[49] Albert L. Kohlmeier, *The Old Northwest as the Keystone of the Arch of the Federal Union: A Study in Commerce and Politics* (Bloomington, Ind., 1938), pp. 209–15; E. Merton Coulter, "The Effects of Secession upon the Commerce of the Mississippi Valley," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* III (1916–17), 278.

[50] Coulter, "Effects of Secession . . . ," *Miss. Val. Hist. Rev.,* p. 278. See also Eugene H. Roseboom, "Southern Ohio and the Union in 1863," *Miss. Val. Hist. Rev.,* XXXIX (1952–53), 29–30; Henry C. Hubbart, "Pro-Southern Influences in the Free West 1840–1865," *Miss. Val. Hist. Rev.,* XX (1933–34), 49–51; Wood Gray, *The Hidden Civil War: The Story of the Copperheads* (New York, 1952), pp. 96–117; George F. Milton, *Abraham Lincoln and the Fifth Column* (New York, 1952), pp. 93–94; Kenneth M. Stampp, *Indiana Politics during the Civil War* (Indianapolis, 1949), pp. 12, 56–57, 95–96, 122–23, 160–61. See William C. Cochran, "The Dream of a Northwestern Confederacy," *Wisconsin State Historical Society Proceedings, 19 October 1916* (Madison, 1917), pp. 226–28 n. for statements similar to that of Yates by Gov. Oliver P. Morton, Sen. Jas. Doolittle, Sen. Jas. W. Grimes, Clement Vallandigham, John A. McClernand, Andrew Johnson, Stephen A. Douglas, and Beriah Magoffin, all of whom represented the Mississippi basin.

in spite of the partial relief afforded by illicit trading activities that came to be carried on up and down the great river. In the summer of 1862 an attempt was made to secure a through passage for Union shipping by digging a canal to by-pass the Confederate batteries at Vicksburg, but without success.[51] In state and congressional elections in mid-October the Democracy won startling victories in Ohio and Indiana, no small part of the revulsion of the voters against the Republicans being due to the failure of the Federal government to reopen the river to trade.[52] On October 21 Major General John A. McClernand, a prominent Illinois politician, was authorized to raise troops in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa for an expedition to capture Vicksburg and clear the Mississippi to New Orleans.[53] Eight days later Stanton wrote McClernand that "the importance of the expedition on the Mississippi, is every day becoming more manifest, and there will be the utmost endeavor on the part of the Government to give it aid and strength." [54]

On October 28 Stanton sent a confidential dispatch to the governors of New York and the New England states announcing that "General Banks has established his headquarters in New York to organize a Southern expedition. All the troops in your state not otherwise appropriated are placed at his command. You will please confer with him, and render him every aid in your power in speedily organizing his command." [55] Nathaniel P. Banks was a veteran of Massachusetts and congressional politics who had begun his career as a bobbin boy in a Waltham mill and had risen from that position to become a three-term governor of his state and speaker

[51] Robert S. Henry, *The Story of the Confederacy* (New York, 1931), p. 165.

[52] See below, pp. 22–23 (Gov. Morton's letter to Lincoln).

[53] Order signed by Stanton, dated Oct. 21, 1862, Stanton Papers.

[54] Stanton to McClernand, Oct. 29, 1862, Stanton Papers.

[55] *O. R.*, Series III, II, 691–92; see also Stanton to Banks, Oct. 27, 1862, Nathaniel P. Banks Papers, from microfilms in the Ramsdell Collection, University of Texas.

of the national House of Representatives. Courageous in battle, sprucely dressed, vain, a mellow-voiced orator, Banks tried to be all things to all men politically, and he harbored serious hopes of some day living in the White House. Without military training, he had nevertheless won some slight reputation as a soldier by putting up a stiff fight against Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain.[56] Neither this reputation, which was wholly unmerited, nor his presidential aspirations were to survive the Red River expedition.

At the time Stanton set Banks upon this rocky road, it was the intention of the government that he should proceed with his expedition to the Gulf of Mexico and make a landing on the coast of Texas, presumably in accordance with the promise that Lincoln was said to have given the National War Committee.[57] The destination of the expedition was not made public, but it was generally believed in New York and New England that Banks was headed for Texas.

Thus Lincoln's response to his two problems was an attempt to solve both at once. The restive Northwest was to be placated by an expedition to clear the Mississippi under the leadership of a well-known politician from that section; the Northeast was to be assuaged by sending an army of soldier-settlers to Texas led by a prominent Massachusetts statesman. If the reaction of the *New York Times* was any indication, Lincoln had hit on the exact formula the situation required. In an editorial entitled "A New Era—Banks and McClernand," the *Times* said:

> It seems that the Government is about taking hold in earnest of two of its great duties—the opening of the Mississippi River and the military occupation of the State of Texas. General McClernand is a

[56] Fred H. Harrington, *Fighting Politician: Major General N. P. Banks* (Philadelphia, 1948), *passim*.

[57] "In conversing with you I indicated the importance of a coastwise expedition against Texas . . . Banks is now organizing an expedition for that purpose . . ." Stanton to McClernand, Oct. 29, 1862, Stanton Papers.

Western man . . . sympathizing thoroughly with the anxiety of the population of Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Iowa for the reopening of the Mississippi River. . . . Each individual member of the expedition will feel a personal interest in its success, because to a certain extent the pecuniary prosperity of every one of them will be found dependent on the unobstructed navigation of the Mississippi River. . . .

[As for Texas, once] the State is possessed, the work contemplated by the Government is but begun. What is that great territory worth to the Union if it is again to be remanded . . . to the traitor owners who monopolize the lands . . . ? Texas needs free white population. New England has such to spare. . . . Texas has cotton and sugar lands of the best sort, and already employs free (German) labor to a limited extent in their cultivation, showing that white men can do such work in Texas. New England has the capital, the enterprise and the labor to push this fact to the full extent of development. . . .

In general words we sum up and say that Texas needs to be *colonized* as well as captured. . . . New England and the Middle States must furnish the new population for Texas. . . . Industrious, practical, enterprising, liberty-loving men will follow him [Banks] with enthusiasm, help him to win back the vast empire of Texas, and to found beneath the genial skies there not one State only, but half a dozen States. . . .

We certainly regard the organization of the movements to be led by Gens. McClernand and Banks, as among the most philosophic, practical and hopeful enterprises of the war. . . .[58]

But early in November there occurred a sudden shift in administration policy. On the 8th Banks was given command of the Department of the Gulf, superseding Ben Butler, and he received his orders from General-in-Chief Halleck. The President, Halleck said, "regards the opening of the Mississippi River as the first and most important of all our military and naval operations, and it is hoped that you will not lose a

[58] *New York Times,* Oct. 30, 1862. Evidently Stanton had the idea of letting McClernand too operate against Texas when the Mississippi had been cleared. Cf. S. P. Chase to Hiram Barney, Oct. 26, 1862, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. No further reference to this collection of Chase papers will be made.

moment in accomplishing it." After this had been done, he continued, then other operations might be considered, such as breaking up the railroads at Jackson and Marion, Mississippi, or an expedition up the Red River to release the cotton and sugar of that area and to establish a base for an advance on Texas.[59]

Therefore between October 29 and November 9 the destination of the Banks undertaking was changed from Texas to the Mississippi. In the interval two things occurred that must have influenced Lincoln in bringing about this reversal. One was the Democratic victory in Lincoln's own state of Illinois on November 4. First Ohio and Indiana, and now Illinois—the bedrock of the Northwest had repudiated the administration. The other incident was the receipt by the President of the following panicky letter from Governor Oliver P. Morton of Indiana:

> The fate of the North-West is trembling in the balance. The result of the late elections admonishes all who understand its import that not an hour is to be lost. . . . During the recent campaign it was the staple of every democratic speech, that we of the North-West had no interests or sympathies in common with the people of the Northern and Eastern States; that New England is fattening at our expense; that the people of New England are cold, selfish, money-making, and through the medium of tariffs and railroads are pressing us to the dust; . . . that socially and commercially their [our] sympathies are with those of the people of the Southern States rather than with the people of the North and East; that the Mississippi river is the great artery and outlet of all Western commerce; that the people of the North-West can never consent to be separated politically from the people who control the mouth of that river. . . . In some of these

[59] *O. R.,* xv, 590. The department was enlarged to include the state of Texas. In this order the administration was killing two birds with one stone. The destination of Banks's expedition was of course changed in response to the demand that the Mississippi be opened. Butler was removed primarily because of his high-handed treatment of European diplomats in New Orleans, which was proving greatly embarrassing to the State Department. See Hans L. Trefousse, *Ben Butler: The South Called Him Beast!* (New York, 1957), pp. 122–34.

arguments there is much truth. Our geographical and social relations are not to be denied; but the most potent appeal is that connected with the free navigation of the Mississippi river. The importance of that river to the trade and commerce of the North-West is so patent as to impress itself with great force upon the most ignorant minds and requires only to be stated to be at once understood and accepted. And I give it here as my deliberate judgment, that should the misfortune of arms, or other causes, compel us to the abandonment of this War and the concession of the independence of the Rebel States, that Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois can only be prevented, if at all, from a new act of secession . . . by a bloody and desolating Civil War. . . . The plan I have to suggest is the complete clearing out of all obstacles to the navigation of the Mississippi river, and the thorough conquest of the States upon the Western bank. [Here Morton presents his plan for accomplishing this.] . . . Another result to be gained by the accomplishment of this plan will be the creation of a guaranty against the further depreciation of the loyalty of the North-Western States, by giving the assurance that, whatever may be the results of the war, the free navigation and control of the Mississippi river will be assured at all events.[60]

Certainly Governor Morton left nothing to Lincoln's imagination. Of all the causes that had set the Northwest "trembling in the balance" the blockade of the Mississippi was called the most important. Doubtless Morton re-emphasized the seriousness of the situation when, close on the heels of his letter, he visited Washington early in November.[61] Therefore in attempting to account for the substitution of the Mississippi for Texas as Banks's destination it seems reasonable to assume

[60] Morton to Lincoln, Oct. 27, 1862, Stanton Papers. This letter can also be found in William D. Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton* (Indianapolis-Kansas City, 1899), I, 206 ff. It is quoted in part in Wood Gray, *Hidden Civil War,* pp. 116–17. For other opinions on the need for opening the Mississippi, see Mark Skinner to Stanton, Oct. 20, 1862, Stanton Papers; New York *Weekly Herald,* Oct. 25 and Nov. 1, 1862; McClernand to Lincoln, Nov. 10, 1862 (a very strong statement, similar to Morton's); S. Treat to David Davis, and William J. Allen to Stanton, both Nov. 20, 1862, Lincoln Papers (Allen was a Representative from Illinois); New York *Tribune,* Nov. 21, 1862; Gov. Morton to Lincoln, Feb. 9, 1863; McClernand to Lincoln, Feb. 14, 1863; McClernand to Gov. Yates, Feb. 16, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[61] *New York Times,* Nov. 9, 1862.

that Lincoln was influenced by Morton's frantic warning, by the result of the Illinois elections, and possibly by other considerations of a similar nature of which no record has survived. When the river had been opened, and Lincoln did not believe it would take long, then he was willing to have Banks invade Texas.[62]

Texas was in this way abandoned for the time being, but the administration did nothing to correct the prevailing impression that Banks was headed there. Governor Andrew continued to supply Banks with virtually untrained men—they scarcely could be called troops—under the blissful delusion that they were going to Texas as settlers and only incidentally as soldiers.[63] In New York Banks received warm support from various mercantile interests, which organized a Committee for Aid and Assistance to help in recruiting troops.[64] "Merchants here and in New England," Banks informed Stanton, "are much interested in the success of the expedition." [65] Amos Lawrence, the textile tycoon, wrote Banks that he was willing to serve with him whatever his destination.[66] Ezra Lincoln, Assistant United States Treasurer at Boston, informed Banks that Hoyt, Sprague and Company, which included Governor William Sprague of Rhode Island, was very anxious to secure permission to carry merchandise to the Southern ports that would lie within Banks's command. He asked Banks's assistance to get the necessary clearance from the Treasury Department, adding pointedly: "I am *firm* in the *faith* that Gov. Sprague is desirous of favoring all your fortunes in the future." [67] With obliging alacrity, Banks recommended the rep-

[62] Cf. Banks to Lincoln, Dec. 19, 1862, Lincoln Papers; Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VI, 43, 73–74, 76–77, 83.
[63] New York *Tribune,* Feb. 7, 1863.
[64] *New York Times,* Dec. 4, 1862.
[65] *O. R.,* Series III, II, 705.
[66] Lawrence to Banks, Nov. 22, 1862, Banks Papers.
[67] Ezra Lincoln to Banks, Nov. 18, 1862, Banks Papers.

resentative of Hoyt, Sprague and Company to Secretary Chase.[68] Such a request was no surprise to Chase. Over a month ago his future son-in-law had written him expatiating on the need for securing cotton and keeping "bread in the mouths of our people" and asking that Harris Hoyt, described as a Texas Unionist, be allowed to carry "a few goods" into Texas to exchange for cotton—the transaction to include only loyal men, of course.[69] And then there was Assistant Secretary of the Navy Fox, who asked Banks to allow his brother-in-law to take his ship with the expedition to help supply the troops.[70]

Among the general public there was much interest in the expedition, and one of Banks's correspondents touched on a point that seemed to be of great concern when he inquired if emigrant families desiring to settle permanently in the South would be allowed to accompany the troops.[71] It was everywhere assumed that Texas was the object of these warlike preparations.[72] So open a secret was the supposed target of Banks and his men that the Confederate press commented frequently on the impending "Texas" invasion.[73] Down in New Orleans General Butler, who had heard disquieting rumors that Banks was headed for his bailiwick, was assured by Secretary Chase in mid-November that "Gen. Banks goes to New Orleans, not, as I understand, to supersede you; but to conduct an expedi-

[68] Banks to Chase, Nov. 22, 1862, Banks Papers.

[69] Sprague to Chase, Oct. 14, 1862, Chase Papers.

[70] Fox to Banks, Nov. 19, 1862, Banks Papers.

[71] J. A. Tuttle to Banks, Nov. 18, 1862, Banks Papers.

[72] George K—— to Col. Lincoln, Henry Moore to Banks, Nov. 3; E. W. Kinnan to Banks, L. W. Powell to Banks, George G. Sampson to Banks, Nov. 4; Johnson H. Jordan to Banks, Nov. 5; George Ashboth to Banks, Brig. Gen. B. S. Roberts to Banks, John H. Beckwith to Banks, Nov. 6; William A. Harris to Banks, A. C. Warburg to Banks, William B. Lindall to Banks, W. C. Davis to Banks, Hiram Faulkner to Banks, Nov. 7 (all letters 1862), and many others in the Banks Papers; Marshall, ed., *Butler Correspondence,* II, 469; Theodore C. Pease and James G. Randall, eds., *The Diary of Orville Hickman Browning* (Springfield, 1925), I, 610; New York *Tribune,* Nov. 22 and Dec. 9, 1862, Feb. 7, 1863; *New York Times,* Oct. 30, 1862.

[73] New York *Tribune,* Dec. 9, 1862.

tion to Texas while you are engaged nearer to your present Headquarters. Most earnestly do I hope for his success." [74]

Heightening the deception still further, Andrew Hamilton was appointed military governor of Texas on November 14 and was unctuously adjured by Stanton to re-establish the Federal authority in that state.[75] This order was mockery, for Stanton well knew that Hamilton, like almost everyone else, was laboring under a misapprehension and that his expectations were sure to be disappointed. Any of the Texas faction who read the last paragraph of Stanton's departmental report, which the New York *Tribune* paraphrased on December 9, were doubly confirmed in their error. "Another point of attack," wrote the Secretary of War, "is by armed settlements upon the vacant government lands in Florida and Texas. Thousands in the Northern and Western States are impatiently waiting the signal of military movement to plant their homes in the best territory of this continent and bring it back to the Union as loyal States." [76] The linking of Florida and Texas in this way was especially misleading, for Eli Thayer, the founder of the Emigrant Aid Company, was busily at work trying to get up a colonizing expedition to repeat in Florida what he had done in Kansas.[77] The upshot of all this was that New York and New England were duped into thinking that Banks

[74] Marshall, ed., *Butler Correspondence,* II, 469.

[75] *O. R.,* Series III, II, 782–83. Hamilton was given the rank of brigadier general and authorized to raise two regiments of Texas troops.

[76] *Ibid.,* p. 912.

[77] C. M. Clay to Eli Thayer, Sept. 29, 1862, Lincoln Papers; James A. Garfield to Burke A. Hinsdale, Oct. 13, 1862, Mary F. Hinsdale, ed., *Garfield-Hinsdale Letters* (Ann Arbor, 1949), p. 65; John B. Henion to S. P. Chase, Oct. 18, 1862, Chase Papers; newspaper clipping Dec. 5; S. C. Pomeroy to E. M. Stanton, Dec. 8, 1862; John Bittman to Lincoln, Jan. —, W. C. Bryant to Lincoln, Feb. 8, 1863, Lincoln Papers; *New York Times,* Feb. 8, 1863. The House Military Affairs Committee reported favorably on Thayer's scheme and recommended authorizing the President to accept 30,000 volunteers for the purpose. See *New York Times,* Jan. 9 and 13, 1863.

was leading the way to another and a fairer Kansas beneath salubrious Southern skies, where rich homesteads and confiscated estates could be had for the taking.[78]

There was confusion, fumbling, and delay in getting the expedition ready, much to Lincoln's anxiety and impatience.[79] On November 22 the exasperated President, believing that the general was involved in indefinite procrastination, wrote Banks and told him in the most positive manner that he would be ruined if word got about that there was to be further lengthy delay before setting sail. "You must be off before Congress meets," he told him.[80] The procurement of transports was left mainly to Cornelius Vanderbilt. Patriotically, the commodore accepted no pay, but unfortunately some of the vessels he furnished were completely unseaworthy and at least one was rotten in every frame and strake.[81]

At last on December 4 Banks was ready to put to sea. Present to wish him bon voyage were George Opdyke, Governor Andrew Curtin of Pennsylvania, Vanderbilt, Collector Hiram Barney, and various other officials and merchants.[82] Accompanying Banks was "Governor" Andrew Hamilton. Also bound for the Gulf, although the commanding general did not know about it at the time, were a number of Hamilton's friends, patrons, and creditors, men Banks later described as having come with the expedition for "the basest mercenary purposes," who had loaded themselves on the transport *Illinois* without a by-your-leave from the military.[83] Among this

78 Cf. Caroline B. Sherman, ed., "A New England Boy in the Civil War," *New England Quarterly,* v (1932), 317. Banks's troops came from Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York. *New York Times,* Dec. 5, 1862.

79 Harrington, *Banks,* pp. 86–87.

80 *O. R.,* Series III, II, 862.

81 Harrington, *Banks,* pp. 87–88.

82 *New York Times,* Dec. 5, 1862.

83 *O. R.,* XV, 613, 642.

group was none other than John Austin Stevens, Jr., who had been encouraged to make the trip by Chase and so had, as Banks put it, stowed away on the *Illinois*.[84]

New Orleans was reached on December 14. "Not a soul here anticipated our arrival," Banks wrote Halleck smugly, "and scarcely a man on board suspected our destination until we were steaming up the Mississippi."[85] Even Butler did not know he had been replaced until Banks so informed him.[86] The reaction of Hamilton and his nondescript crew of hangers-on can readily be imagined; to travel thousands of miles and then land in the wrong place was most unsettling. They were, to say the least, highly incensed. Being an ambitious politician, Banks disliked making enemies, particularly influential ones, if he could possibly avoid it. So he made an effort to mitigate the rage of the Hamilton clique by sending a small force to occupy Galveston. As it turned out, this was worse than nothing. The garrison had scarcely settled itself on Galveston Island when it was skillfully gobbled up on New Year's Day by Confederate troops led by "Prince John" Magruder of Yorktown fame.[87]

Obviously Banks could do no more. His orders specifically and positively directed him to assist in clearing the Mississippi before undertaking any other operations. Caught in this predicament, Banks put Hamilton off as long as he could; "blarneyed and humbugged" him was the way a disgruntled Texan expressed it.[88] "For any good that Gov. Hamilton can be doing to Texas," remarked a *Times* correspondent, "from his headquarters in New-Orleans, he might just as well be in Timbuc-

[84] Charles A. Hecksher to S. P. Chase, Nov. 29, 1862, Chase Papers; Banks to his wife, Mar. 14, 1863, Banks Papers.
[85] *O. R.,* xv, 613.
[86] Trefousse, *Butler,* p. 133.
[87] *O. R.,* xv, 201–202; Marshall, ed., *Butler Correspondence,* II, 40–42.
[88] Marshall, ed., *Butler Correspondence,* III, 41.

too." [89] This could not go on indefinitely, however, and at last Banks was forced to tell the "governor" exactly how matters stood. Putting an end to his evasions and circumlocutions, on January 19 he told Hamilton plainly that his orders from Washington would not allow him to launch an invasion of Texas or even to send a force to the Rio Grande; in fact, it was doubtful if he would ever move against Texas. Hamilton had been promised the occupation of the lower Rio Grande even before he left Washington; now it appeared that he had been "deliberately and purposely humbugged." The next day he left for the capital, where he hoped to get Texas set off as a separate military department.[90] Also disappointed, John Stevens and his associates returned to the East, although Banks attributed the departure of the latter to the poor opportunities then available in New Orleans for speculating in cotton.[91]

Upon his return, Hamilton lost no time in making himself heard, if Greeley's *Tribune* was any indication. It charged the administration with needlessly abandoning long-suffering Southern Unionists. "How long will our rulers close their ears to such appeals as Mr. Hamilton is now again making in the name of his gallant State?" the *Tribune* inquired editorially. Nor was that the only injustice that had been done. "The troops on the Banks expedition were, almost without exception, under the impression that Texas was their immediate destination, and large numbers, of both officers and men, had enlisted under that idea, and intended to make Texas their permanent home, and to call to them at a later date their

[89] *New York Times,* Jan. 13, 1863.

[90] Alfred C. Hills to Hudson, Jan. 25, 1863, Bennett Papers; Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.,* p. 359; Charles P. Shaw to Dr. ——, Dec 29, 1862, Banks Papers.

[91] Banks to his wife, Mar. 14, 1863, Banks Papers.

friends and families." [92] But instead of settling on the fat lands of Texas, they were unloaded amid the swamps and bayous of Louisiana, where mosquito, alligator, and breakbone fever imperiled life and limb. Now they might even have to fight Confederates. No wonder they were put out.

The winter and early spring brought no diminution of the administration's difficulties. When he returned to the East, Butler was welcomed like a conquering Caesar.[93] His removal from command had aroused much resentment, for as Thurlow Weed told the President, "he is strong with the people." [94] He was so strong, in fact, and his friendship appeared to be so essential that at a conference on January 3 between himself, Lincoln, Seward, and Chase he was offered a command further up the Mississippi, an offer that, if it had been accepted, might well have meant that the attack on Vicksburg might have been led by Butler rather than by Ulysses S. Grant. But he refused, saying that he would consider nothing less than going back to New Orleans. Lincoln objected that this would disgrace Banks. Then, Butler replied, you have disgraced me.[95] The outcome of this particular conference is not known, but in the third week of February an order was drawn up in the War Department providing that Butler was once more to take command of the Department of the Gulf. Banks was to continue his operations against Port Hudson under Butler's general supervision. Once the Mississippi was opened, Banks was to occupy Texas, which would then be made a separate

92 New York *Tribune,* Feb. 7, 1863; Smith, "Banks Expedition," *La. Hist. Qrly.,* p. 3-9. See also *New York Times,* Feb. 6, 1863.

93 *New York Times,* Jan. 9 and 14, 1863; New York *Tribune,* Jan. 14, 1863; Mary Banks to Banks, Jan. 13 and 26, 1863, Banks Papers; Trefousse, *Butler,* p. 136.

94 Thurlow Weed to Lincoln, Feb. 12, 1863; see also same, Mar. 8, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

95 John W. Turner to Colonel ——, Jan. 4, 1863, Benjamin F. Butler Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. According to the *New York Times,* Jan. 5, 1863, Stanton was also present.

department under his command.[96] Rumors of such an arrangement had already seeped into the press, but the order was never issued. Butler perhaps felt that the department was not large enough to hold both him and Banks, and since Lincoln could not afford to strip Banks of his entire command, there the matter ended.[97]

Meanwhile sentiment favoring the invasion of Texas continued unabated. On February 2 the *Times* quoted its New Orleans correspondent as saying that "a few thousand men, under a dashing officer, or under Gov. Hamilton, sent to the mouth of the Rio Grande, could take possession of this line of Texas, secure to the New-York merchants an enormous trade in cotton, and . . . secure that State to the Union."[98] Five days later the paper urged in an editorial that Texas be occupied to break up the Confederate trade with Mexico.[99] The *Tribune* continued to compliment Hamilton and to proclaim him worthy to lead troops back into Texas.[100] Not long after his return to New York, the discomfited John Austin Stevens, Jr., had the satisfaction of sending Lincoln a resolution of the New York Chamber of Commerce requesting the immediate occupation of the Rio Grande Valley.[101] Another of the President's correspondents advocated sending an army of 50,000 men to subdue and settle Texas, the government providing each with a hundred-dollar bounty and eighty acres of land. He had made inquiries among the local German popula-

[96] Unsigned orders dated Feb. 16 and 17, 1863, Lincoln Papers. In (1) of the first order "Banks" is an obvious slip of the pen for "Butler." See also Marshall, ed., *Butler Correspondence,* III, 21–27.

[97] *New York Times,* Jan. 10 and 17, 1863; New York *Tribune,* Jan. 27, 1863. The immediate occasion for Butler's removal, the hostility he had aroused among European diplomats in New Orleans, was also doubtless taken into account by Lincoln.

[98] *New York Times,* Feb. 2, 1863.

[99] *Ibid.,* Feb. 7, 1863.

[100] New York *Tribune,* Jan. 31, 1863.

[101] Resolution of the New York Chamber of Commerce, Feb. 21; J. A. Stevens, Jr., secretary, to Lincoln, Feb. 23, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

tion around Dobbs Ferry, New York, and had been told that "Plenty of People would be ready to go to Texas" on these terms.[102] On April 27 a committee appointed by the Boston Board of Trade addressed a long letter to Lincoln, calling attention to the trade in cotton and munitions that the Confederates were carrying on via the Rio Grande and Mexico. Even possession of the Mississippi, said the committee, would not seriously reduce the value of this trade to the South, and the Board of Trade therefore urged that a powerful military and naval force be sent to occupy the lower Rio Grande and southern Texas.[103]

As before stated, Lincoln was willing to have Banks go to Texas as soon as the Mississippi was cleared of hostile forces, but contrary to his expectations the President found to his sorrow that the conquest of the river was an arduous and complicated task. Grant and Sherman, advancing from the north, met with serious reverses soon after Banks took command at New Orleans. Grant's overland march on Vicksburg was broken up by the brilliant exploits of two Southern cavalrymen, Earl Van Dorn and Nathan Bedford Forrest.[104] Sherman landed on the Yazoo and was bloodily repulsed at Chickasaw Bluff on December 29. A month later, early in February, Grant began to approach the Confederate Sevastopol by way of the Mississippi. After many adventures he managed to get his troops and transports past the Confederate batteries, and on April 30 he landed in force at Bruinsburg on the east bank of the river below Vicksburg.[105] While these events were taking place, Banks, who was supposed to advance up the river and form a junction with Grant, was wandering about

[102] J. A. Hamilton to Lincoln, Feb. 15 and 25, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[103] Chas. G. Nasro [?] and others to Lincoln, April 27, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[104] Robert S. Henry, *"First with the Most" Forrest* (Indianapolis and New York, 1944), pp. 112–21.

[105] William T. Sherman, *Memoirs of Gen. W. T. Sherman* (New York, 1892), I, 318–20; Henry, *Story of the Confederacy,* pp. 254–59.

central Louisiana gathering in cotton and livestock, to the great chagrin of General-in-Chief Halleck.[106] "The *opening of the Mississippi River*," Halleck wrote Banks heatedly, "has been continually presented as the *first* and *most important* object to be attained. Operations up the Red River, toward Texas, or toward Alabama, are only of secondary importance, to be undertaken *after* we get possession of the river. . . ." [107]

Either by reason of Halleck's expostulations or because he could not discover any more cotton or cattle, Banks returned to the river and invested Port Hudson, a smaller counterpart of Vicksburg. Then at last Lincoln received the news that he had perhaps despaired ever of hearing: on July 4 Vicksburg surrendered to Grant, and the garrison of Port Hudson, hearing the news, hoisted the white flag four days later. The prerequisite to the invasion of Texas had now been achieved; the Mississippi was open to Federal shipping.

The old pressures favoring a Texas expedition were still there. Andrew Hamilton succeeded in winning the backing of at least three New England governors, and in July he went to Washington to see the President.[108] At about the same time the elder Blair passed on to Lincoln a letter that he had re-

[106] Banks to Lincoln, May— and May 4, 1863, Lincoln Papers; *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 494–95, 500–501.

[107] *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 500.

[108] Hamilton to Lincoln, July 25, 1863, Lincoln Papers. On August 14 Gov. Gilmore of New Hampshire wrote Lincoln asking for the reappointment of Hamilton as military governor and the fitting out of an expedition capable of putting Texas "completely under the control of Union soldiers and citizens." He offered to help raise troops in New England especially for that purpose. (*O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 680.) On August 29 Gov. Buckingham of Connecticut expressed similar sentiments, remarking that since the Banks enterprise had not, as had been expected, gone to Texas, "I would unite with his excellency Governor Andrew, and others, in calling your attention to the importance of fitting out an expedition . . . to take military possession of the State." In conclusion the Governor observed that this would allow "the rich and abundant agricultural productions of that State to be used for the benefit of loyal citizens." (*Ibid.*, Series III, III, 738.) While these letters were not written until after Lincoln had ordered Banks to Texas (Aug. 5; see below, pp. 35–36), it seems not unlikely that Lincoln was aware of the governors' attitude before then. Hamilton may well have told him in July.

ceived from William Alexander, another prominent Unionist refugee from the plains. Alexander was one of those who had gone on the wild goose chase to New Orleans with Hamilton, Stevens, and the others. In his letter he declared that now was the time for the occupation of Texas, "that is, if the President, who promised that an expedition should be sent there as soon as Vicksburg should be taken, keeps his word." [109] Less significant but still interesting was a letter from one John Bachelder that arrived at the White House toward the end of the month. With a candor too seldom encountered in the correspondence of the period, this gentleman laid all his cards on the table. He was a cotton manufacturer of New London, Connecticut, he told Lincoln, and for that reason he wanted the government to send armed emigrant settlers to Texas—"military colonists," he called them—to raise cotton.[110] Edward Atkinson's ideas still maintained their vigor.

In the meantime the State Department's desire to see Federal troops in Texas suddenly became intensified. In May Charles Francis Adams advised the government to disrupt Confederate trade with Europe via Mexico.[111] On June 7 French troops entered the ancient capital of the Montezumas. In July graphic stories came from the American consul at Monterrey concerning the pitiable plight of Unionist refugees from Confederate authority.[112] Still more important was a dispatch from William L. Dayton, United States Minister in Paris, disclosing that the "Mexican question has become a most prominent one in the policy of the Emperor, and the more his invasion of that country is complained of, the more anxious does he seem as to its success." [113] Not only had Slidell been

[109] Alexander to Frank Blair, July 28, 1863, Lincoln Papers.
[110] John Bachelder to Lincoln, July 26, 1863, Lincoln Papers.
[111] *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 656–57.
[112] *Ibid.*, Series III, III, 213.
[113] Dayton to Seward, June 26, 1863, *Senate Executive Documents*, 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 11, p. 460.

talking with the Emperor, but so also had W. S. Lindsay and J. A. Roebuck, British members of Parliament and staunch advocates of recognizing Confederate independence.[114] Disturbing rumors were afloat of a Franco-Confederate rapprochement and of possible French annexation not only of Texas, but of Louisiana and Arizona as well.[115]

If Lincoln needed any further encouragement to undertake the Texas project, this information was evidently enough to turn the trick. On July 29, Lincoln sent a note to Stanton in which he said: "Can we not renew the effort to organize a force to go to Western Texas? . . . I believe no local object is now more desirable." [116] And on the following day he wrote Frank Blair that he had "commenced trying to get up an expedition for Texas." [117] Thereby he would kill two birds with one stone, forestall the French in Mexico and silence the persistent lobby at home.

Consequently on August 5 the President wrote General Banks that "recent events in Mexico, I think, render early action in Texas more important than ever. I expect, however, the General-in-Chief will address you more fully upon this subject." [118] Without realizing it, Halleck had in fact anticipated Lincoln's order by several days, for on July 24 he had written Banks that he considered an attack on Texas "much the more important" undertaking for the troops of his depart-

[114] For the Roebuck-Lindsay affair see Frank L. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy* (Chicago, 1931), pp. 466–80, esp. p. 480.

[115] *Sen. Exec. Doc.*, 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 11, pp. 459–60, 470; *O. R.*, Series III, III, 522. Actually there was little danger of recognition, especially after the news of Vicksburg and Gettysburg reached Europe. See *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, 1894–1927), Series II, III, 802–804, 807–14, 818, 820, 830–34, 837–38, 845–46, 855 (cited hereafter as *O. R. N.*; all references will be to Series I unless otherwise noted); George E. Baker, ed., *The Diplomatic History of the War for the Union, Being the Fifth Volume of the Works of William H. Seward* (Boston, 1884), pp. 113, 115, 403.

[116] *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 659.

[117] Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln*, VI, 356.

[118] *Ibid.*, p. 384.

ment, and that "every preparation should be made for an expedition into Texas." [119] Both Grant and Banks believed that Mobile should be the next goal of Union forces in the West, but after Lincoln's wishes had been communicated to the War Department, Banks received additional dispatches from Halleck containing direct and positive orders to establish the Federal flag in Texas with the least possible delay.[120] The military judgment of even the hero of Vicksburg had to be ignored.

In his brief communications of July 31 and August 6 ordering the invasion of Texas, Halleck suggested no particular plan of campaign. He had, however, in his order assigning Banks to command back in November, 1862, recommended the Red River as a jumping-off point for an advance on Texas. "That movement had always been pressed upon me by General Halleck," Banks later recalled, "before I left Washington to assume command of that department," [121] and during the summer and fall of 1863 this line of march became a sort of fetish with Halleck. So he hastened to amplify his first noncommittal instructions to the Massachusetts general. In a letter written on August 10 he said: "In my opinion, neither Indianola nor Galveston is the proper point of attack. If it be necessary, as urged by Mr. Seward, that the flag be restored to some one point in Texas, that can be best and most safely effected by a combined military and naval movement up Red River to Alexandria, Natchitoches, or Shreveport, and the military occupation of Northern Texas. This would be merely carrying out the plans proposed by you at the beginning of the campaign.... Nevertheless, your choice is left unre-

119 *O. R.,* XXVI, Part i, 632.

120 *Ibid.,* 661; Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VI, 374. Banks to William Dwight, to Halleck, Aug. 1, 1863, Banks Papers; *O. R.,* XXVI, Part i, 664, 672.

121 "Red River Expedition," *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War,* 38th Cong., 2d Sess., II, 5. Cited hereafter as *Com. Con. War.*

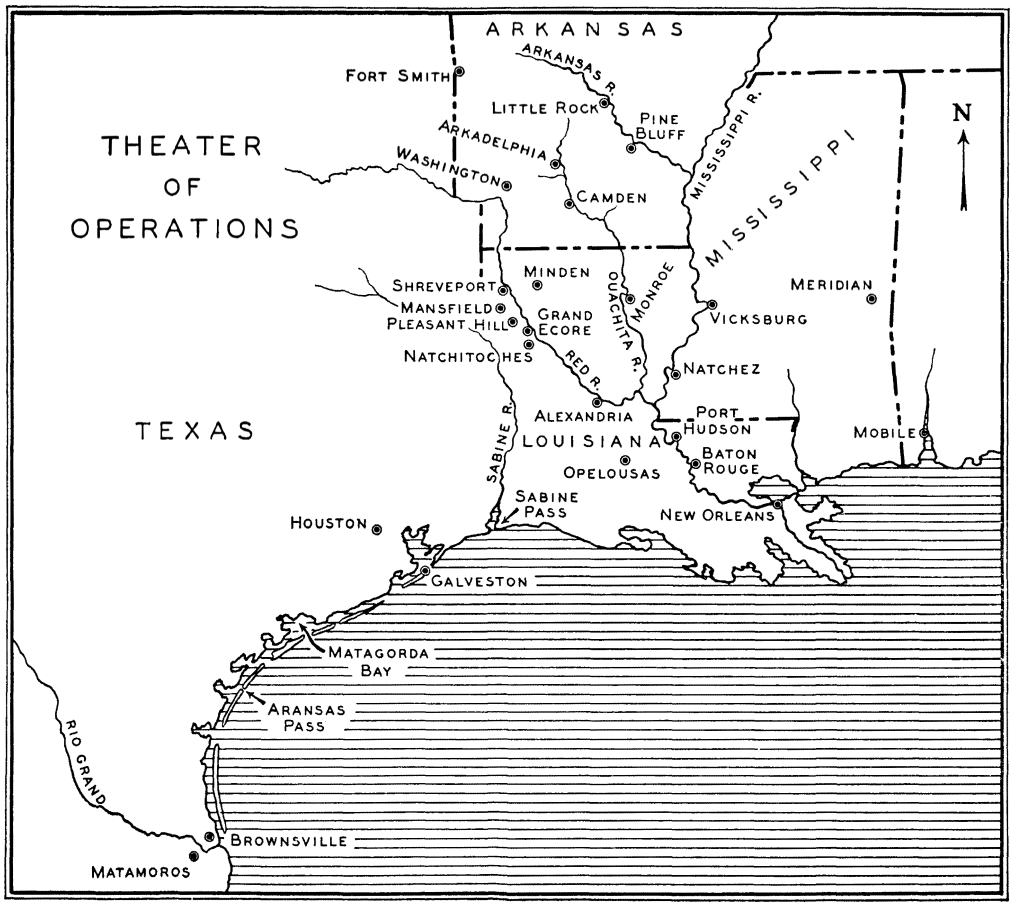
stricted." [122] But Halleck was to cling to this strategy with the tenacity of a Louisiana snapper.

Because of the vast distances that lay between Washington and New Orleans, Banks did not receive Halleck's last-quoted letter until August 25. On the next day Banks replied to the general-in-chief's suggestions by raising numerous logistical objections to the Red River route into Texas. The easiest and most expeditious way to attack the state at that time, he believed, was by an amphibious descent on the coast near Sabine Pass, followed by an overland advance on Galveston and other points on the coast.[123] Accordingly on the last day of August Banks ordered Major General William B. Franklin, a veteran of the Virginia campaigns of 1862, to take the Third Division and one brigade of the First Division of the 19th Corps aboard transports and proceed to Sabine Pass. Southern defenses were believed to be feeble there, and if naval vessels succeeded in overwhelming the Confederate guns, Franklin was to land his men and strike inland to the Beaumont-Houston railroad and await reinforcements.[124]

The fleet of transports arrived before Sabine Pass on Monday, September 7. The next day four Federal gunboats nosed into the shallow bay like men tentatively prodding a hornet's nest, with the result that they were badly stung. Fort Griffin, the Confederate work protecting Sabine City, was held by less than fifty men with five guns, but before the day was through two of the gunboats were disabled and compelled to surrender while the rest of the Northern flotilla looked on in utter impotence. Franklin felt that there was nothing left to do but turn around and go back to New Orleans, and that is what he did. Thus ended Banks's first serious sally against the Lone Star

[122] *O. R.,* XXVI, Part i, 673.
[123] *Ibid.,* pp. 695–97.
[124] *Ibid.,* pp. 287–88.

FIGURE 1.


ARKANSAS
ARKANSAS R.
FORT SMITH
LITTLE ROCK
PINE BLUFF
MISSISSIPPI R.
N
THEATER OF OPERATIONS
ARKADELPHIA
WASHINGTON
CAMDEN
MISSISSIPPI
SHREVEPORT
MINDEN
OUACHITA R.
MONROE
MERIDIAN
MANSFIELD
PLEASANT HILL
GRAND ECORE
VICKSBURG
NATCHITOCHES
RED R.
NATCHEZ
TEXAS
ALEXANDRIA
PORT HUDSON
MOBILE
SABINE R.
LOUISIANA
BATON ROUGE
OPELOUSAS
SABINE PASS
NEW ORLEANS
HOUSTON
GALVESTON
MATAGORDA BAY
ARANSAS PASS
RIO GRAND
BROWNSVILLE
MATAMOROS

State, an attempt that the Confederate high command west of the Mississippi could not believe was intended as anything more than a feint.[125] Not without some reason, Banks blamed the failure on the "ignorance" of the naval officers involved.[126]

Absurdly checkmated in his first effort to carry out his orders from Washington, Banks determined next to try an overland invasion, either by way of the Red River into northeastern Texas, or directly across southern Louisiana to the lower Sabine. "While the army is preparing itself for one or the other of these movements," Banks wrote Lincoln on October 22, "I propose to attempt a lodgment upon some point on the coast from the mouth of the Mississippi to the Rio Grande."[127] The overland advance took the form of a rather feeble thrust up Teche Bayou under the direction of General Franklin. The country through which Franklin tried to take his men was so destitute of all provender, and Confederate defenders were so alert that this Federal offensive was not able to penetrate much beyond Opelousas.[128]

While Franklin's column was pursuing its fruitless marches, Banks was preparing his amphibious assault on the lower Texas coast, and on October 26 the transports and escort vessels left New Orleans.[129] The first landing occurred on November 2 at Brazos Santiago, where, as Banks grandly proclaimed, "the flag of the Union floated over Texas to-day at meridian precisely."[130] It floated, at least, over a few acres of barren dunes.

During the rest of the month Banks annoyed the Texas behemoth with other pinpricks, making lodgments at Browns-

[125] *Ibid.*, pp. 288–97.

[126] Banks to his wife, Sept. 22, 1863, Banks Papers.

[127] *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 292. "Mississippi" seems to be a slip of the pen for "Sabine."

[128] *Ibid.*, pp. 19–20; Richard Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction* (New York, 1890), p. 150.

[129] *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 397.

[130] *Ibid.*, p. 396.

ville, Rio Grande City, Aransas Pass, Matagorda Island, and a few other places in the face of a scattered handful of Southern troops.[131] To Banks this looked like progress. He had, in obedience to orders, established the national flag in Texas, although his possession of a few outposts was a far cry from the general occupation of the state that the administration probably had hoped for in the beginning.[132] But even though he had taken fully three months to accomplish that much, some of the Texas exiles who were with him expressed their satisfaction at the course of events.[133] Military Governor Andrew Hamilton had again appeared and had set up his headquarters in Brownsville.[134] All in all, Banks was well pleased with himself.[135]

Halleck, however, was not pleased. Even before Lincoln wrote the notes to Banks and Stanton that initiated the campaign against Texas, Halleck had wanted to attack that state as soon as the Mississippi was opened. Moreover, he wanted to attack by way of the Red River and northwestern Louisiana. His views were the result of his considered military judgment, and he was evidently under the impression that Banks, the amateur soldier, had accepted his advice. With this in mind he directed Major General Frederick Steele, commanding in Arkansas, to advance southward and join forces with Banks on the Red River.[136] Now he learned that Franklin's column had never really got started and that Banks was making his real effort to invade Texas by sea. Finding his advice—for he had never given Banks a direct order as to the route he should pursue—neglected, Halleck was greatly nettled. In a letter of November 18 Banks had casually mentioned that the

131 *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.
132 Stanton to Horatio Woodman, Sept. 27, 1863, Stanton Papers (Letterbooks).
133 Banks to his wife, Nov. 25, 1863, Banks Papers.
134 *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 832; Harrington, *Banks*, p. 134.
135 Harrington, *Banks*, p. 133.
136 *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 683, 807.

best line of operations against Texas was by way of the Atchafalaya, which connected the Gulf with the Red River. By this remark he did not intend in any way to disparage his current operations on the coast, for at that time of year neither the Red nor the Atchafalaya was navigable.[137] But Halleck seized on this to give him a dialectical advantage in venting his displeasure. On December 7 he wrote Banks and said:

> I have received your letter of November 18, "off Aransas Pass." In this you say "the best line of defense for Louisiana, as well as for operations against Texas, is by Berwick Bay and the Atchafalaya." I fully concur with you in this opinion. In regard to your Sabine and Rio Grande expeditions, no notice of your intention to make them was received here till they were actually undertaken.[138]

This was a standard tactic of Halleck in his role as general-in-chief: to urge, suggest, persuade, but to avoid whenever possible the responsibility of giving a direct order; and then, if his advice was neglected, to censure as if a command had been disobeyed.[139]

In answer Banks explained that the urgent nature of his orders to plant the flag in Texas and the length of time required to communicate with Washington conspired to prevent him from keeping Halleck informed in advance of his every undertaking.[140] He told his superior that at least he should perfect his hold on the Texas coast by taking Galveston, the key to the whole Confederate position in that sector. It was a wasted argument; Halleck was not to be put off. Without giving an outright order, he continued to insist on the plan that seems to have become almost an obsession with him.

Banks was not the only one whom Halleck tried to convert

[137] *Ibid.*, p. 410.
[138] *Ibid.*, pp. 834–35.
[139] Cf. Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant* (New York, 1868), II, 57–87, especially p. 70.
[140] *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 871–72.

to his strategical concepts. Steele in Arkansas and Sherman in Mississippi were also approached, and it is somewhat surprising to find these able professional soldiers, particularly Sherman, more in sympathy with Halleck's ideas than was Banks. "Generals Sherman and Steele," Halleck wrote Banks on January 4, "agree with me in the opinion that the Red River is the shortest and best line of defense for Louisiana and Arkansas and as a base of operations against Texas." [141] Sherman, who shortly before the war had been superintendent of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy near Alexandria,[142] told Banks that he was "very anxious to move in that direction" if Grant approved. In any event he could do nothing until he returned from his central Mississippi raid, which began late in January.[143]

Grant was also brought into Halleck's rather complex network of correspondence. The captor of Vicksburg, who had recently added to his reputation by defeating Bragg at Missionary Ridge, believed that the next move in the Gulf Department should be directed against Mobile; both he and Banks had favored the capture of that point since the previous July. This was not to be, for on January 8 Halleck dispatched to Grant a letter in which he said that Banks's campaign had been undertaken more for diplomatic than for military reasons.

> As a military measure simply, it perhaps presented less advantages than a movement on Mobile and the Alabama River. . . . But, however this may have been, it was deemed necessary as a matter of political or State policy, connected with our foreign relations, and especially with France and Mexico, that our troops should occupy and hold at least a portion of Texas. The President so ordered, for reasons satisfactory to himself and his cabinet, and it was therefore

141 *Ibid.,* XXXIV, Part ii, 15, 42, 145.

142 Sherman, *Memoirs,* I, 172–93.

143 *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part ii, 267. He believed such an expedition would be justified only if rapidly executed, in the manner of the Meridian raid. See *ibid.,* p. 497.

> unnecessary for us to inquire whether or not the troops could have been employed elsewhere with greater military advantage.
>
> I allude to this matter here, as it may have an important influence on your projected operations during the present winter. Keeping in mind the fact that General Banks' *operations in Texas,* either on the Gulf coast or by the Louisiana frontier, *must be continued during the winter* [italics supplied], it is to be considered whether it will not be better to direct our efforts, for the present, to the entire breaking up of the rebel forces west of the Mississippi, rather than to divide them by also operating against Mobile and Alabama.[144]

And Halleck went on to uphold the Red River as the line of advance that should be adopted. This letter is of considerable interest, for in it Halleck clearly implied that the original motives (described simply as diplomatic) that led Lincoln to order Banks to Texas in August, 1863, were still in force and that "operations must be continued during the winter" against that state. There is a possibility, of course, that the general-in-chief received some such order from Lincoln, but if so, no record of it has been discovered. Banks was never informed of any additional instructions from the President requiring the campaign against Texas to continue during the winter. On the contrary, there is evidence strongly indicating that the administration did not regard expanded operations in Texas as being of pressing importance; there seems to have been substantial satisfaction with what had already been done. Apparently Seward believed the Banks expedition to have served its diplomatic purpose, for on November 23 he wrote the general congratulating him upon his "successful landing and occupation upon the Rio Grande, which is all the more gratifying because it was effected at a moment of apparently critical interest in the national cause." [145] On the day before Christmas the President wrote Banks and thanked him for the "successful

[144] *Ibid.,* p. 46. See also *Com. Con. War,* p. 227.

[145] *Sen. Exec. Doc.,* 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 6, p. 17; see also Baker, ed., *Seward's Works,* v, 121.

and valuable" operations in Texas.[146] At that time, in fact, Lincoln was much more concerned about political affairs in Louisiana; future military movements in the Gulf Department he left to Banks's judgment. In short, from the point of view of national policy Texas was now a routine military problem that no longer demanded top-level direction from civil officers of the government. In the light of these circumstances, it is safe to say that Halleck without justification cited the original reason given for ordering the Texas invasion as an argument to coerce Grant into accepting an unwelcome and unwise plan of campaign. In truth, there was no longer any reason why the Texas campaign had to be "continued during the winter." [147]

These facts were of course unknown to Grant when he read Halleck's letter. Very much aroused by this blow to his designs against Mobile, Grant got two of his staff officers to write to Charles A. Dana, once one of Greeley's editors and now an assistant secretary of war.[148] The object was to persuade Dana to intercede with Stanton to overrule Halleck's sacrifice of the Mobile campaign to operations up the Red River.[149] Grant's great fear of the latter venture was that it might tie up troops that would be greatly needed in the crucial spring campaigns east of the Mississippi. Nothing came of the appeals to Dana, however, and in deference to the wishes of

146 Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VII, 90.

147 For instance, see C. T. Christensen (assistant adjutant general to Maj. Gen. E. R. S. Canby) to Banks, May 17, 1864, *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 632: "It is the policy of the government to maintain a force in Texas, but . . . this policy will be satisfied if a single point is held." With respect to Lincoln's purported desire for a Red River expedition, the statements in Jay Monaghan, *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers* (Indianapolis and New York, 1945), p. 358, and Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals,* p. 341, appear to be erroneous.

148 C. A. Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War* (New York, 1898), p. 103.

149 John A. Rawlins [?] to Dana, Jan. 13, 1864; J. H. Wilson to Dana, Jan. 15, 1864, Stanton Papers

the general-in-chief Grant was obliged to give his reluctant consent to the expedition up the Red.

Banks too was won over. As late as December 30 he still very much desired to continue his activities on the Texas littoral, and in a letter of that date to Halleck he raised numerous objections to the Red River route.[150] But in his next communication to Halleck on the subject, written on January 23, he revealed that he had completely reversed his position:

> General: Your dispatches of the 4th and 11th January are received. . . . I am much gratified to know that General Sherman is instructed to co-operate with the commands on the Mississippi. With the forces you propose [Banks's troops plus detachments from Sherman and Steele], I concur in your opinion, and with Generals Sherman and Steele, "that the Red River is the shortest and best line of defense for Louisiana and Arkansas, and as a base of operations against Texas." . . . I shall most cordially co-operate with them in executing your orders.[151]

The promised help of Sherman doubtless contributed to the complete transformation of Banks's attitude, but it could have scarcely been the major factor at work. Other influences were present to help produce the general's sudden turnabout. For months Lincoln had been extremely anxious for the Federal-held part of Louisiana to be politically organized preparatory to forming a new reconstructed state government under the plan that the President announced officially in his proclamation of December 8, 1863. He had been informed the preceding summer that steps were being taken to elect a convention to adopt a new state constitution in conformity with the new regime. When he discovered in the autumn that practically nothing had been done in this matter, and that a conservative, proslavery clique was preparing to stage an election for state

150 *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 888–90.
151 *Ibid.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 133.

and Federal offices, he wrote Banks a strongly worded letter in which he described himself as bitterly disappointed at the inaction of the Unionist group.[152] In other messages to the Massachusetts general Lincoln re-emphasized his peremptory wish to see "a free-state reorganization of Louisiana, in the shortest possible time."[153] Although for obvious reasons he could not express himself freely on such a subject, the President could not have failed to consider the fact that the general elections were less than a year away and that the electoral votes of Louisiana and the other states that might be restored to the Union would almost certainly be cast for the Republican party's nominee—that is, for himself.

Banks answered Lincoln's complaints by blaming for the lack of progress the venomous political factionalism with which he had been bedeviled.[154] In order that the general's path might be smoothed, Lincoln informed him, in a letter that arrived in New Orleans early in January,[155] that he was to be "master of all" political arrangements in Louisiana.[156] This authority of course made Banks's task considerably easier, since it gave him the power to steamroller his local political adversaries.[157] And Banks was a thorough politician. He had hopes of winning the 1864 presidential nomination himself.[158] If he did not carry out Lincoln's wishes, he might find himself removed, even as Butler had been before him, with resulting injury to his political career. In such a situation it was discreet to yield. He would naturally have to remain in

152 Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VI, 364–65, VII, 1–2; W. M. Caskey, *Secession and Restoration of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, 1938), 80–96.

153 Lincoln to Banks, Dec. 24, 1863, Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VII, 90.

154 Banks to Lincoln, Dec. 16, 1863, Banks Papers, Lincoln Papers.

155 Banks's reversal regarding the Red River occurs, it will be recalled, in the interval between his letters to Halleck of Dec. 20 and Jan. 23.

156 Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VII, 89–90.

157 Cf. Cuthbert Bullitt to Banks, Jan. 8, 1864, Banks Papers.

158 See below, pp. 62–63.

Louisiana and so would not be able to give any personal attention to Texas matters for some weeks to come. On the other hand, Halleck's cherished march up the Red River could not take place until the annual March rise of that stream opened it to Federal shipping. If he devoted this interval in the early weeks of 1864 to political affairs, he could then be ready to undertake the Red River invasion in March, and so satisfy the general-in-chief as well as the Commander-in-Chief. All things considered, this seemed to be the best course to follow.[159]

There was yet another reason behind Banks's decision in favor of a Red River campaign. In the latter part of January [160] Banks received information that in the Red River country there were enormous quantities of cotton owned by the Confederate government, with many thousands of additional bales in southern Arkansas. There were, moreover, at least two officers in the Confederate service who were willing, for a price, to see to it that this cotton was not burned upon the approach of the Federal army, as was required by a Confederate statute. Banks therefore believed that he was faced by a golden opportunity to secure thousands of bales of cotton that could be sold for the benefit of the national treasury. It would be a feather in his cap and would bring him much valuable publicity to pour millions of dollars into the gaping public coffers. That was not all. Wealthy Massachusetts mill interests, interests that were politically powerful in the general's home state, were exceedingly desirous of getting a supply of cotton, and the Louisiana agent of the firms in question was intimately connected with Banks's close friends and associates.[161]

Cotton, politics, and Halleck's insistence were therefore the three principal elements that combined to evoke Banks's letter

159 Banks's line of reasoning is deduced from the circumstances surrounding him and his reactions to them.

160 At some time prior to the 30th; exact date unknown. Cf. document under date Jan. 30, 1864, Banks Papers.

161 See below, pp. 57–58.

of January 23, which completely accepted the views and opinions of the general-in-chief. At that date the account of the origins of the campaign ends, and that of the campaign itself begins. Between the publication of Olmsted's *Journey Through Texas* and Banks's letter of January 23, 1864, stretched a thread of causality that, although sometimes erratic, maintained its continuity to the end. Caught up from Olmsted by New England Emigrant Aiders and textile manufacturers, given an ostensible moral justification by the outbreak of war, and bolstered by the propaganda of vociferous Texas Unionists, the drive for the occupation of Texas was well under way by late 1862. Temporarily frustrated by the administration's vital political and military stake in opening the Mississippi, the movement gained fresh impetus after the capitulation of Vicksburg and Port Hudson had accomplished that object. Opportunely assisted by a supposed crisis in American-Franco-Confederate diplomacy, the would-be conquerors of Texas at last saw the forces under Banks make landings and incursions along the coast of that state in the summer and fall of 1863, with the establishment at Brownsville of Andrew Hamilton's free-state administration. After these things had been done, modest achievements though they were, Lincoln evidently felt that his obligations in Texas had for the present been discharged. At this juncture, however, the personal predilections of the general-in-chief entered the picture, and Halleck made use of the momentum that prior events had given to the Texas invasion, and of the influence of his official position, to implement his own strategic inclinations for an attack on Texas by way of the Red River. Helped by various political factors, he finally succeeded in securing the assent and co-operation of General Banks, and the result was that series of marches and battles known as the Red River expedition.

CHAPTER II

*

Concerning Cotton

*

THE VAST QUANTITIES of cotton reported to be in the Red River country constituted one of the reasons that influenced Banks in favor of the invasion of northern Louisiana. These thousands of bales were also the object of intense interest on the part of a number of other persons of varying degrees of importance. During and after the expedition there were a great many allegations and rumors afloat about Banks's connivance in cotton speculations and irregularities that were said to have taken place in the course of the campaign. In a congressional investigation of the expedition in 1865, interest in these matters frequently overshadowed inquiry into military events. There suspicions were aired, accusations made, and names mentioned, including that of President Lincoln. For these reasons it is necessary to investigate this confused and complicated subject and determine as far as possible what actually took place.

The widespread corruption that afflicted the nation in the years following Appomattox did not spring up overnight. It was rooted deeply in the rich soil of a wasting and disruptive war. The beginning of hostilities produced numberless opportunities for men to exchange their honesty for easy money.[1] Many men succumbed to a variety of temptations, but of all

[1] Cf. Fred A. Shannon, *The Organization and Administration of the Union Army 1861–1865* (Cleveland, 1928), I, 53–107.

the agents of venality, cotton was king. The severance of normal trade relations drove prices to undreamed-of levels; by August, 1864, cotton sold for $1.90 a pound in greenbacks at Boston.[2] Profits were pyramided in fantastic fashion, and a fortune could be made by one successful transaction.[3] With such enormous profits to be had, speculators swarmed like bluebottle flies in the wake of Federal armies. According to Major General Edward R. S. Canby, they "follow in the track of the army, traffic in its blood, and barter the cause for which it is fighting, with all the baseness of Judas Iscariot, but without his remorse." [4] Illicit trade across military lines was carried on in contravention of Confederate as well as Federal laws. Southern civilians sometimes stole government-owned property and smuggled it out to Yankee traders; cotton permits were sold on the streets of New York; soldiers were bribed; traders were blackmailed; treasury agents were disgraced. While Minié balls were reaping harvests of corpses, speculators gathered in sheaves of greenbacks.[5] It is scarcely remarkable that the postwar years were not distinguished as an era of national rectitude.

If unlawful trade was to exist, it was logical that much of it

[2] James F. Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to 1877* (New York, 1906–1907), v, 290.

[3] *O. R.*, xxvi, Part ii, 577.

[4] E. Merton Coulter, "Commercial Intercourse with the Confederacy in the Mississippi Valley," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, v (1918–19), 389–90.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 378–83; *O. R.*, Series IV, iii, 282; Robert F. Futrell, "Federal Trade with the Confederate States, 1861–1865, a Study of Governmental Policy" (unpub. Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt, 1950), pp. 33–34, 228, 320; J. W. Schuckers, *Life and Public Services of Salmon P. Chase* (New York, 1874), pp. 328–29; *House Reports of Committees*, 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 24, pp. 85, 109–10; A. S. Roberts, "The Federal Government and Confederate Cotton," *American Historical Review*, xxxii (1926–27), 265–72; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 235; [A. K. McClure, ed.?] *Annals of the War* (Philadelphia, 1879), pp. 705–23; Thomas K. Knox, *Campfire and Cottonfield: Southern Adventures in Time of War* (New York, 1865), pp. 193–94, 307–309; E. L. Erikson, ed., "Hunting for Cotton in Dixie: From the Diary of Captain Charles E. Wilcox," *Journal of Southern History*, iv (1938), 493–513; Dana, *Recollections*, pp. 16–20; Rhodes, *History of the United States*, v, 274–313.

should be carried on in the Mississippi Valley. New Orleans and Memphis, long the great commercial centers of the lower river, were occupied by Northern troops relatively early in the war, and in both cities cotton-trading, legal and illegal, grew rapidly in volume. Senator Zachariah Chandler estimated that by the summer of 1864 $20,000,000 to $30,000,000 in supplies had been sent to the Confederacy through Memphis. The very nature of the Mississippi itself, lined with dense forests and entered by numerous bayous, made it impossible to eliminate clandestine trade with the Confederates, especially when such trade was either winked at or actively encouraged by army officers and agents of the Treasury Department.[6] Up and down the river the pursuit of cotton became a fever of epidemic proportions; a Forty-niner would have found the atmosphere stimulating.

When Banks arrived in New Orleans to terminate the Butler regime, he found a state of affairs scarcely calculated to add luster to the honor of the Union cause. He wrote home to his wife and described the situation, telling her that the stealing that had gone on under Ben Butler's auspices included such things as

> sugar, silver plate, horses[,], carriages[,] everything they could lay their hands on. There has been open trade with the enemy. . . . This State could have been made and ought now to be thoroughly for the Union & against the Confederate States. Instead of that they have been robbed of their silver forks and spoons, jewelry, . . . plate, pictures, books, carriages, horses, houses[,], plantations & negroes, not for the benefit of the government but for individual plunder. They see women of the town sleeping in their beds and houses, & they are terribly bitter against a gov[ernmen]t that permits such things. . . . I am glad to feel that I have no desire for plunder.[7]

[6] *O. R. N.* XXVI, 340–52; Smith-Brady Commission Report, pp. 159–74, 269–75, Adjutant General's Office, National Archives; Coulter, "Commercial Intercourse with the Confederacy," *Miss. Val. Hist. Rev.*, p. 384.

[7] Banks to his wife, Jan. 15, 1864, Banks Papers.

Banks was merely reciting the facts. Ben Butler's brother Andrew had come to New Orleans with him, and the general had secured the credit to set him up in business. At least part of this business consisted of carrying across Lake Ponchartrain such contraband material as salt, quinine, shoes, food, and liquors, most of which went to Confederate authorities in exchange for cotton. All this of course had the approval of General Butler. Yet when it was bruited about that Andrew had made huge profits from illegal activities, General Butler said piously that all Andrew's dealings had been legitimate and that in any event his brother's gains had been greatly exaggerated. Actually, said the general, he had made less than $200,000 in the last six or seven months—evidently a paltry sum in Ben's estimate.[8] Even with such limited opportunities for turning an honest dollar, Andrew decided it was worth while to stay in business, and when his brother was replaced by Banks he determined to see if the latter would step into the role of patron. Banks had not been in Louisiana two weeks when he received the following note from Andrew Butler and C. A. Weed, who was an associate of various high treasury officials and who had a hand in several large cotton deals and swindles: "Dear Sir[:] If you will allow our commercial program to be [carried?] out as projected previous to your arrival in this department[,] giving the same support and facilites [*sic*] as your predecessor I am authorized on [receiving?] your assent to place at your disposal $100,000."[9] No obliqueness, no euphemisms here; but then the Butler touch was never noted for its delicacy. Banks did not accept. "It was no temptation for me," he told his wife. "I thank God every night that I

[8] Smith-Brady Report, pp. 72–79, 146–58; "Chase Diary and Correspondence," p. 329. B. F. Smith, witness before the Smith-Brady Commission, stated (p. 148) that he was an associate of Andrew Butler and was himself a "rebel" at the time of the trade across Ponchartrain.

[9] C. A. Weed and A. J. Butler to Banks, Dec. 27, 1862, Banks Papers. Weed may have been acting as Butler's agent.

have no desire for dishonest gains." [10] Probably Banks's honesty was a major reason for Andrew Butler's departure from New Orleans a few months later.[11]

Another individual with whom the general had to deal was George S. Denison, Secretary Chase's young relative. In January Denison coolly informed Banks that he was a special agent of the Treasury Department and that all matters of trade both internal and external were his exclusive responsibility. He did offer, with something approaching condescension, to confer with the commanding general on important matters.[12] Although Supervising Special Agent Benjamin F. Flanders was soon given general control of Treasury Department affairs in New Orleans, Denison was still in a position of considerable authority. This was unfortunate in view of the fact that he was a bribetaker. Businessmen often experienced great difficulty in getting commercial permits of various types to which they were legally entitled. But when Denison was presented with a cash "gift," all obstacles melted away. And then there was the case of Dr. Crawcour's silver plate, which had been sequestered by Ben Butler. The doctor found that the only way to recover it was by paying a bribe to W. C. Gray, deputy collector of the port. He had to have at least $200, said Gray, because he would have to split with Denison.[13] Without going into further detail, this brief sketch of official life behind the scenes illustrates some of the hazards that Banks had to circumvent in dealing with commercial affairs.

Banks's policy with respect to cotton underwent a number of fluctuations during the general's tenure of command in the Gulf Department. His principal concern was to get as much as possible to come into market, including that which lay be-

[10] Harrington, *Banks*, p. 135.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] Denison to Col. J. S. Clark, Jan. 19, 1863, Banks Papers.
[13] Smith-Brady Report, pp. 59–68, 72–79.

yond Federal lines. He was well aware that New England's textile mills needed raw material, and he was always willing to consider any plan that would tend to increase the supply. When cotton came from Confederate territory, there was always the danger that it would be paid for in supplies or munitions. This did in fact often happen, although Banks did what he could to prevent it. Probably no one could have suppressed contraband trade completely, so widespread and multifarious were the illegal transactions continually taking place, often with the help of corrupt treasury agents or army officers.[14] Apparently even Banks was sometimes deceived into committing an indiscretion, as in the case of A. S. Mansfield. According to supersleuth Allan Pinkerton, Mansfield was a Bostonian who came to New Orleans with ample funds and letters of credit from "the most respectable houses in Boston" and was involved with Jacob Barker of the New Orleans Bank of Commerce in a vast scheme to use foreign exchange in purchasing Confederate cotton. Banks once rashly gave this man a permit to carry $45,000 in goods to a point above Baton Rouge beyond Federal lines. This was done without the knowledge of Supervising Agent Flanders, who later found out that Denison had allowed the goods to go through, instructing Deputy Collector Gray not to record the permit on the books. The whole affair, said Flanders, was contrary to all laws and regulations and caused much talk among New Orleans merchants. But Banks could be blamed only for bungling; he was not corruptly involved.[15]

The general came into conflict with treasury officials in other ways. For example, he ordered that cotton and other commodities coming into New Orleans should pay a tax for

[14] Cf. Banks to W. H. Emory, July 22, to Cuthbert Bullitt, July 22, to Halleck, Aug. 29, to N. J. T. Dana, Oct. 15, to Lincoln, Dec. 11, 1863, to ——, Mar. 16, 1864, Banks Papers.

[15] Smith-Brady Report, pp. 26–28, 14–15, 203–13.

the benefit of Federal hospitals, although he had no legal authority to do so.[16] More important was Banks's policy toward property accumulated during the course of military operations. On March 31, 1863, the War Department issued General Order No. 88, providing that military commanders should turn over to treasury agents all captured and abandoned property except that which was required for the use of the army, such as munitions, forage, and the like. In direct violation of this order, Banks made it a practice to sell the products of the country captured during a campaign and apply the proceeds to the expenses of the Department of the Gulf. Most of the commodities captured in Louisiana in the spring and summer of 1863 and on the Texas coast in the fall were disposed of in this way, and from May, 1863, to May, 1864, about $1,000,000 was used to defray departmental expenses. This practice was of course regarded by treasury officials as a usurpation of their duties by the military, but they could do little but complain. In view of the corruption in that department it seems likely that Banks actually saved the government money by violating the law in this manner.[17]

In spite of such irregularities and indiscretions, there is no evidence to show that Banks himself received tainted money. After the war he was in very modest circumstances financially. Still, when one encounters in the Banks Papers such items as a bill of $1050 for a costume ball given by Mrs. Banks, or a $637 confectioner's bill covering a period of three months, it is impossible not to think that such extravagances would have seriously strained the general's $7000 salary.[18] Banks was, as Lin-

[16] Cf. Flanders to Banks, Sept. 22, 1863, Banks Papers; Chase to Frank Howe, Feb. 20, 1864, Chase Papers.

[17] *House Executive Documents,* 38th Cong., 1st Sess., No. 3, pp. 436–37; Smith-Brady Report, pp. 35–37, 39–42, 52–56; *House Exec. Doc.,* 39th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 97, pp. 14, 29; John Hutchins to Stanton, Dec. 4, 1863, Stanton Papers.

[18] Bills and receipts, Aug. 31, 1863, Feb. 22–24, Mar. 7, April —, 1864, Banks Papers; Thomas H. S. Hamersly, comp. and ed., *Complete Army Register* (Washington, 1880), Part ii, p. 192.

coln intended him to be, the political boss of Louisiana. Might not the expenses incurred in discharging politico-social obligations come under the head of "departmental expenses"? It seems probable, at least. But to repeat, while the general often disregarded rules and regulations, and was associated with men of questionable character, he nevertheless declined dishonest gain in the midst of numberless opportunities to do otherwise.

With regard to devising a method by which the produce of the country could be put on the market, Banks's ideas were considerably enriched during his invasion of central Louisiana in the spring of 1863. In the course of this foray Banks, through his quartermaster, bought or seized from the local people cotton and livestock to a value of $3,000,000.[19] Immensely impressed by the great quantities of booty to be obtained in this rich part of the South, he wrote to Washington asking for official sanction for a system of trade that would involve levying a fifty-per-cent "contribution" on local products. The owners would be permitted to bring or ship their crops to New Orleans and receive half the proceeds in greenbacks, the rest being appropriated by the government. "I believe," said Banks two years later, "that if that policy had been pursued, I could have paid from $60,000,000 to $100,000,000 into the treasury in the year 1863, which would have paid all the expenses of that department for five years."[20] Secretary Chase, however, with Stanton's endorsement, rejected the project. "If I had allowed individuals to take the $3,000,000 which we paid into the treasury," Banks commented, "and given them a sniff at the $60,000,000 or $100,000,000 that might have been obtained there, there would have been much less complaint about the affairs in that department [of the treasury]. The quarter-

[19] *Com. Con. War,* p. 345.
[20] *Ibid.,* pp. 27, 252–53.

master thinks the $3,000,000 we paid over to the government has been the cause of all our trouble. . . ." [21]

In August Banks suggested another plan to the Treasury Department. This time he proposed that the owners of cotton and other produce be allowed to bring it in to Federal outposts on the Mississippi, turn it over to treasury agents, and receive a portion of the value in greenbacks, with a provision allowing loyal persons to claim an additional part of the proceeds. Chase rather favored this scheme, but felt that it could not be justified under existing statutes, so there the matter ended.[22]

Finally in the face of these rebuffs Banks, on September 3, 1863, issued an order that stated that "the products of the country intended for general market may be brought into the military posts on the line of the Mississippi within the Department of the Gulf, viz., at New Orleans, Carrollton, Donaldsonville, Baton Rouge, and Port Hudson." [23] This order must have opened the door to considerable evasion of treasury regulations regarding the importation of cotton,[24] but in view of the character of many of the men who administered those regulations the government probably was not the loser because of it.

Meanwhile, far from the seat of war, plans were being laid to get possession of large quantities of the precious staple to feed hungry New England mills. Soon after the fall of Port Hudson, Brigadier General William Dwight, commanding a brigade under Banks, took ship for his native Massachusetts.[25]

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

[22] Futrell, "Confederate Trade with the Confederate States," p. 353; "Chase Diary and Correspondence," pp. 401–402, 405 ff.

[23] *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 715.

[24] Cf. C. J. Wright and C. K. Hawkes to Lincoln, Jan. 8 and 9, 1864, Lincoln Papers.

[25] Cf. *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 636.

He stopped at Washington to confer with Lincoln, Stanton, and Halleck, and then went on to Boston. There he met with his brother, Daniel A. Dwight, and "Colonel" Frank E. Howe. The latter, a friend of Banks and much esteemed by Secretary Chase, was nominally an assistant quartermaster with the rank of captain.

On August 20 William Dwight wrote Banks from Boston. Undoubtedly cognizant of the general's presidential aspirations, Dwight spoke glowingly of his widespread popularity, particularly among the "largest merchants and manufacturers." [26] A little over two months later, Frank Howe sent Banks a letter introducing Daniel Dwight:

> Now I want to write earnestly of my friend Dwight—give him your ear—and *your confidence*. Rather than he should not succeed in his enterprise I would give up all here, and go to New Orleans. You can trust him. He is a man of remarkable caution. Let me tell you his position—or show you his hand.
>
> He represents Frank Skinner & Co., Saml. Hooper [27] and about 10 to 12 millions of dollars of Mass[achusetts] invested mill property. They are now about the only ones working in New England, and are working largely for government. Pay a tax of $500,000 and employ about 10,000 hands.
>
> Anything you can do for Dwight will be *deeds well done*.
>
> His means of money and credit are unlimited—I need say no more.[28]

On the following day William Dwight wrote Banks recommending his brother to the general's attention.[29] Skinner also wrote on Dwight's behalf, making it plain that it was his function to purchase cotton for the Skinner mills.[30]

By December, 1863, both Dwight brothers were in Louisiana,

[26] Dwight to Banks, Aug. 20, 1863, Banks Papers.

[27] Wealthy importer, banker, investor, and one of Banks's friends. He represented Massachusetts in the House of Representatives for many years.

[28] Howe to Banks, Oct. 30, 1863, Banks Papers.

[29] William Dwight to Banks, Oct. 31, 1863, Banks Papers.

[30] Skinner and Co. to Banks, Oct. 30, 1863, Banks Papers.

and Daniel was requesting Banks's permission for his agents to conduct purchasing operations beyond Federal lines.[31] Subsequently Banks issued passes through the lines for two of Dwight's men.[32] The little band of merchant adventurers soon was augmented by "Colonel" Frank Howe. For some time Secretary Chase had wanted Howe to undertake a mission on his behalf to the Mississippi Valley, but Howe declined several times.[33] By early November, however, he had changed his mind.[34] In all probability the projects of Skinner, Hooper, and Dwight made him look more favorably on an opportunity to go to New Orleans, especially as Chase was pressing upon him an appointment as general supervising agent of the Treasury Department. "It looks as if I might accept," Howe told Banks in November.[35]

Chase wanted him to compile a report on the functioning of trade regulations in Louisiana, the actions of treasury officials under the regulations, and other similar matters.[36] But these departmental activities were only a part of the duties Chase expected Howe to perform. The others, as Howe doubtless discovered when he conferred with Chase late in the year, had to do with the Secretary of the Treasury's poignant desire to inhabit the White House as soon as the man then living there could be induced to pack up and leave. The Secretary was a perennial presidential candidate, at least in his own mind; he was in fact, as Lincoln once observed, a little insane on the subject.[37] "Mr. C.," Representative George Ashmun

[31] D. A. Dwight to Banks, Dec. 10, 1863, Banks Papers; *O. R.*, XXVI, Part i, 848.

[32] M. M. Hawes to Banks, Dec. 14; Banks to James Bowen, Dec. 24; pass dated Dec. 29, 1863, for H. M. Wright, Banks Papers.

[33] Howe to Banks, Sept. 18, 1863, Banks Papers.

[34] Howe to Banks, Nov. 7; to Mrs. Banks, Nov. 15, 1863, Banks Papers.

[35] Howe to Banks, Nov. 21, 1863, Banks Papers.

[36] Chase to Howe, Feb. 20, 1864, Chase Papers.

[37] Lincoln never took Chase's presidential pretensions very seriously, however. Cf. John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, a History* (New York, 1909), VIII, Ch. XII.

wrote Banks, "is desperately bent on supplanting the President." [38] As 1863 drew to a close, Chase evidently believed that his popular support was growing rapidly. He continually received letters, especially from agents of the Treasury Department, describing his great strength and urging him to run.[39] Chase was in reality the rallying point only for a scattering of malcontents who did not even represent the bulk of Radical sentiment, but this did not prevent him from taking the protestations of his friends at face value.[40] Imagining himself to be a powerful contender, Chase exerted the power of his office to advance his candidacy. "Much of the Treasury machinery and the special agencies have that end in view," Gideon Welles reported to his diary.[41]

Louisiana was one of Chase's many irons in the fire. The reconstructed state government Banks was organizing there very likely would send delegates to the Republican convention, and it would be largely up to Banks whether those delegates would be friendly to Chase or to someone else. He had some reason to think Banks might look favorably on his candidacy.[42] When Banks began to make preparations for the election of a new state government, three opposing factions quickly crystallized, leaving aside, of course, the loyal Confederates, who could take no part in the proceedings. The conservatives, to whom the epithet Copperhead was sometimes applied, selected as their gubernatorial candidate J. Q. A. Fellows. Michael Hahn was the choice of the moderate Republican element and enjoyed the powerful support of General Banks

38 Harry E. Pratt, ed., *Concerning Mr. Lincoln* (Springfield, 1944), p. 110.

39 This generalization is based on many letters in Vols. LXXXIII to XC (Nov., 1863–April, 1864) in the Chase Papers.

40 Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln,* VIII, 310–11.

41 Morse, ed., *Welles Diary,* I, 525.

42 Cf. Frederick Edge to Chase, Dec. 3, 1862; John Hutchins to Chase, Dec. 6, 1863; Crafts J. Wright to Chase, Jan. 24; Howe to Chase, Feb. 6, 1864, Chase Papers. Both Chase and Lincoln regularly received letters dealing with Louisiana politics.

and the military government; Hahn was, in fact, Banks's candidate. Benjamin F. Flanders, supervising special agent of the Treasury Department and recently elected president of the First National Bank of New Orleans, was the choice of the radicals, including Chase.[43]

Chase regretted very much that such a schism had developed between his adherents and the Banks forces, and he undoubtedly realized that the coming restoration of the state government might widen the breach beyond repair.[44] Banks, backed by Lincoln and in supreme command of the Department of the Gulf, held all the cards. Chase must have realized that if some sort of understanding was not reached with the general, not only would Louisiana be lost, but Banks's influential friends in the East, where Chase most needed support, might actively oppose the Secretary.[45] B. Rush Plumly, a sycophantic Banks admirer who coveted the office of supervising special agent of the treasury in New Orleans, understood the situation. He wrote to Chase, saying:

> I want to bring about a junction of forces in the convention to be assured of Genl. Banks and his friends. I *may* be cheated but I don't think so. The General says to me, over and over, with his quiet emphasis, "Work away[;] I'll help you. It is the true policy."
>
> If Genl Banks and his friends are right, and the General consents to postpone his chances four years, the East will be secure. We shall then have only [!] Mr Lincoln to contend with.[46]

To Chase, this projected alliance appeared to be of much importance to his political ambitions, and in these circumstances the significance of Howe's mission becomes more apparent.

To make Howe's task easier, Chase promised to give him

[43] Harrington, *Banks,* pp. 144–46; newspaper clipping, Nov. 28, 1863, George S. Denison Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

[44] Cf. Chase to Howe, Feb. 20, 1864, Chase Papers.

[45] B. R. Plumly to Chase, Dec. 1, 1863, Chase Papers.

[46] *Ibid.*

"such letters to his people," Howe told Banks, "(which he has never done) giving me every facility on [account] of loyality [*sic*], services rendered &c—He will also commission me for this service, leaving me to make use of it [the commission] or not as I see fit." [47] He hoped to be able to bring about, he told Chase, a harmony of interest between the treasury and military factions "the fruits and proof of which I expect to show you on my return." [48] Upon his arrival in New Orleans, Howe found factionalism rampant, but he was also impressed with the political importance of Louisiana.[49] He set to work as a peacemaker, evidently with considerable success. Thomas P. May, a Chase man, wrote to the Secretary in enthusiastic commendation of Howe's appointment as general supervising agent. Until the "colonel" came, he said, there had been a damaging lack of co-operation between the Treasury Department and the army, especially in the case of the New Orleans *Times,* a Chase paper. This paper, owned by May, Denison, Howe, and C. A. Weed, had been considerably harassed by persons in the military government. Acting in the role of conciliator, Howe straightened out the matter to the satisfaction of everyone.[50]

The attitude of Banks toward Chase's attempted rapprochement with him was that of an astute and circumspect politician. Long aware of Chase's desire to be the next president, Banks responded cautiously to the friendly feelers the Secretary put out. He had no doubt, Banks told Chase through an intermediary, that his friends and those of Chase were on good

[47] Howe to Banks, Jan. —, 1864 (letter is incomplete), Banks Papers. Plumly's letter about Banks, Howe said, won him a Treasury Department job because Chase knew Plumly was acceptable to the general. See also Chase to Howe, Jan. 21, 1864, Smith-Brady Report, p. 252, a letter obviously written "for the record."

[48] Howe to Chase, Jan. 14, 1864, Chase Papers.

[49] Howe to Chase, Feb. 19, 1864, Miscellaneous Letters Received, Treasury Department, National Archives.

[50] May to Chase, Feb. 19, 1864, Chase Papers.

terms in New Orleans as well as elsewhere.[51] He would commit himself no further than that. Banks's presidential aspirations were nearly as intense as those of the Secretary, but the general had too much political acumen to reveal his position prematurely,[52] a mistake Chase failed to avoid. His policy was one of watchfulness. If Chase developed enough strength to challenge President Lincoln seriously in the convention, Banks might hold the balance of power and perhaps become a successful compromise candidate. On the other hand it would be foolish to jeopardize his standing with Lincoln until it became plain that there would be a real race for the nomination.[53] When Chase's campaign died virtually at birth, the wisdom of Banks's policy was evident. Ultimately Chase became convinced that Banks had been promoting Lincoln's re-election all along.[54]

According to Howe, another of the duties Chase gave him was that of assisting the operations of Daniel A. Dwight, the agent of the Skinner mills. The "colonel" told Banks that Chase "says that you could and would give me every opportunity to do, what Dwight would like to have me to do &c." [55] Actually no such orders had been issued by Chase, who did not know of Dwight or his plans at that time. The object of this lie was obviously to use the name of the Secretary of the Treasury to induce Banks to look favorably on Dwight's schemes.

Meanwhile Dwight and his associates had been hard at work trying to find a method by which they could buy cotton from the Confederates with greenbacks, bank notes, or bills of ex-

[51] Banks to Howe, Mar. 6, 1864, Chase Papers.

[52] Harrington, *Banks,* p. 138; Futrell, "Federal Trade with the Confederate States," p. 352; Morse, ed., *Welles Diary,* II, 18. Banks received many letters urging his candidacy and describing his chances in glowing terms. Lincoln was cognizant of Banks's ambitions.

[53] There is no direct evidence of Banks's line of reasoning, but his actions would seem to justify the inferences drawn here.

[54] Chase to G. S. Denison, Mar. 16, 1864, Denison Papers.

[55] Howe to Banks, Jan. —, 1864, Banks Papers.

change. They soon discovered that the Southerners were reluctant to sell for paper money because they were frequently able to exchange their cotton for gold or supplies, which were far more valuable to the South. As a result Dwight wanted Banks to make every possible effort to suppress this trade, and so create a demand for his greenbacks. This done, he then desired the general to issue permits (which Banks had no legal right to do) allowing the purchase of cotton within Confederate territory for paper money or bills of exchange. About one-third of the proceeds from the cotton so bought, suggested Dwight, could be invested in government bonds to be withheld from their owners until some future date as a pledge of continued loyalty. The rest of the money, less Banks's hospital tax and freight expenses, could be freely paid over to anyone at all, excepting the Confederate government itself.[56]

Banks believed Dwight's plan to have considerable merit. In fact he himself had been engaged in analogous negotiations, aimed, it is true, at replenishing the national treasury rather than filling the coffers of Frank Skinner and Company. Toward the end of January, about the time he received Dwight's proposals, Banks was treating with two individuals who professed to be able to deliver to the Federals large quantities of Confederate-owned cotton, of which there were supposed to be some 105,000 bales in Louisiana alone. One of these men, a Colonel Guess of Texas, contracted to turn over to Banks at the mouth of the Red River 15,000 bales, for which he and his partners would receive $100,000 immediately and an additional portion of the proceeds at a later date. The residue would be appropriated by Banks's quartermaster and the Treasury Department. The other person with whom Banks had an understanding was J. H. McKee, whose cousin, Major A. W. McKee, held an important position as purchasing agent in the Cotton

[56] Dwight to Banks, Jan. 15 and 27, 1864, Banks Papers.

Bureau of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department. With the co-operation of his Confederate relative, McKee undertook to prevent the Southerners from burning the cotton when the Northern army began its march up the Red River and then turn it over to Banks when he arrived. In recognition of his valuable services McKee was to receive eighteen cents for every pound he delivered. To make sure they were not misused, the funds realized by McKee were to be deposited in a New Orleans bank subject to the joint order of McKee and Colonel Samuel B. Holabird, chief quartermaster of the Department of the Gulf.[57]

Banks believed he had solved the cotton problem in the Southwest. On February 2 he addressed letters to Lincoln and Stanton asking approval for his agreements with McKee and Guess. As a third provision he included the plan urged upon him by Dwight, providing that none of the cotton purchased in this way should come directly or indirectly from the Confederate government. Altogether, Banks wrote enthusiastically, these three plans would produce from 200,000 to 300,000 bales. Results of the utmost importance would follow. Millions would flow into the treasury, which could build up its meager supply of gold by selling cotton in either New England or Europe. Domestic industry would be relieved, Southern officers would be corrupted and demoralized, and the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department would be deprived of a large part of the commodity that was indispensable to the support of that vast empire.[58]

Before he could send his letters, however, Banks received new Treasury Department trade regulations setting up the conditions under which persons living within Confederate lines

[57] Agreements under dates Jan. 30 and 31; Banks to Stanton, Feb. 2, 1864, Banks to Stanton, Feb. 2, 1864, Banks Papers; *Com. Con. War,* pp. 34, 177, 216, 355–56; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part ii, 878; *Senate Documents,* 62d Cong., 3d Sess., No. 987, *passim; O. R.,* LIII, 974.

[58] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 355–56.

would be allowed to bring in their cotton and other produce for sale.[59] The new rules were to go into effect only when promulgated by the commander of each military department. Banks did not send his letters of February 2. Doubtless he felt that since the matter of importing cotton from Confederate territory had been dealt with in the new regulations, his proposals would not be accepted by Lincoln. But he could maintain his freedom of action in commercial affairs by not sending his proposals to Washington, thus not taking the chance of having them vetoed explicitly, and by not promulgating the new regulations in his department. This was the course he followed.

The general's letters remained unsent, but later in the month Howe wrote Chase in fervent commendation of Dwight's project. He inclosed letters from "a Mr. Dwight"—as if he scarcely knew the man—saying that Banks was impressed by the scheme and would "sanction my action under it." If you should, Howe continued, "meet this case successfully through this Department, it would be a great thing politically both here and at home. . . . It will put Treasury notes at a premium, & will bring a demand into the N[ew] Y[ork] market for millions of Government bonds, besides which it will make traitors loyal men in a briefer period, than anything that has yet, or can be done." [60] Despite his enthusiasm, Howe got little satisfaction from Secretary Chase, who made only a guarded and noncommittal reply. "I trust you will succeed," he said, "with the co-operation of Genl. Banks in placing all trade upon the

[59] The regulations provided that (1) persons living within Confederate territory could bring their cotton, etc., through the lines and turn it over to treasury agents, who sold such produce; (2) providing he took the Dec. 8, 1863, loyalty oath, the owner or his agent got 25% of the proceeds; the treasury agent got 1% as his fee. The rest, less taxes, was deposited in the Federal treasury, subject to the claim of the owner at the end of the war upon proof of loyal conduct since he took the oath. *House Executive Departments,* 39th Cong., 1st Sess., No. 3, pp. 330–31.

[60] Howe to Chase, Feb. 19, 1864, Misc. Let. Recd., Treasury Dept. Archives.

best possible footing for parties interested, without prejudice to military operations or to the paramount interests of the country." [61]

Dwight kept trying to find an acceptable *modus operandi.* Late in February or early in March he secured Banks's permission to send a representative to the headquarters of the Trans-Mississippi Department at Shreveport to try to reach some sort of understanding with the Confederates. The man he selected to go was Samuel Simpson, an agent of British manufacturers who had already had cotton dealings with the Confederates.[62] After some difficulties arising from the brisk competition of other traders, Simpson managed to conclude an agreement with Lieutenant General E. Kirby Smith, commanding the department. The terms arrived at called for the purchase of 1000 bales of cotton for a "certain sum" in United States treasury notes, with the option of taking 5000 bales at $160 per bale in Federal currency. Dwight wrote to Frank Howe in explanation of the transaction, offering to take for himself only the 1000 bales,

> if, as I think, by controling [*sic*] the only channel of outlet i.e. via the Mississippi, we can obtain more favorable terms for what remains. The Government can thus prevent the completion of these bargains, which the enemy has made with individuals, for foreign exchange, etc. etc. and which must depend for their success on the ability to export the produce. . . . The necessity exists of action through individuals, and I offer myself, asking a commission on the business which shall pay me for my time and trouble. Mr. Simpson can proceed at once for the first cargo & negotiations for others can be made by you or General Banks.[63]

In other words, Banks should crack down on the business between the Confederates and all other traders and leave a monopoly to Daniel Dwight, who would then be able to squeeze

[61] Chase to Howe, Mar. 30, 1864, Misc. Let. Sent, Treasury Dept. Archives.
[62] Cf. Samuel Simpson to Kirby Smith, Nov. 26, 1863, Banks Papers.
[63] Dwight to Howe, Mar. 14, 1864, Banks Papers.

low prices from Kirby Smith. Frank Howe of course recommended this plan to Banks, but it never received the general's endorsement. By now the time for the opening of the campaign was drawing very near. Banks knew that he must take a definite position with respect to the cotton trade before he left New Orleans for the Red River. But before discussing the decision he finally reached, it is worth while to investigate some of the effects that Louisiana cotton was having on the administration at Washington.

The grimy bales of cotton lying in sheds and barns along the rivers of Louisiana were a long way from Pennsylvania Avenue, but even Lincoln could not escape the forces conjured up by their mere existence. This was nothing new. Incredible pressure was brought to bear upon him on many occasions to give special trading privileges to favored individuals. Sometimes he yielded; other times he refused, even when so powerful a man as Governor William Dennison of Ohio interceded for a friend.[64] Sometimes the President simply was duped. There was, for example, the case of John A. Stevenson. Stevenson, a loyal Confederate, had borrowed a large amount of cotton from the Louisiana State Bank, of which he was a director. The cotton was deep in the interior of the Trans-Mississippi Department. Stevenson proposed to exchange it for a like amount of Confederate-owned cotton that was then in the valley of the Ouachita River, a tributary of the Red, and very much exposed to capture. He then intended to ship the Ouachita cotton to Europe.[65] Kirby Smith gave his approval, and the details were evidently worked out between Stevenson and Colonel W. A. Broadwell, chief of the Cotton Bureau. The

[64] Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln,* VIII, 306–308; Dennison to Lincoln, Mar. 28; J. G. Nicolay to Dennison, April 17, 1864, Lincoln Papers.

[65] J. A. Stevenson to W. A. Broadwell, Aug. 24, 1863; Broadwell to Jefferson Davis, Jan. 15, 1864, E. Kirby Smith Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

agreement that finally emerged provided that some 19,000 bales would be turned over to Stevenson, who would then see to it that the cotton was shipped to George Arnold Holt and Company of Liverpool, in the name of the Louisiana State Bank. The proceeds of the sale would then be turned over to Stevenson by the bank, and he would place it at the disposal of the Confederate treasury. The whole transaction, Broadwell told President Davis, was for the benefit of the government; Stevenson would make no profit whatever. His purpose was simply to be of service to the Confederate cause. The main problem was to get the cotton out of the country and to England. Federal authorities in Washington and New Orleans were contacted and the agreement with the Confederate government was drawn up so plausibly, Broadwell told the President, "that it was regarded as *'Bona fide'* " by the United States officials.

> The rights of Capt. Stevenson were [there] recognized, his position as creditor [debtor] of the [Louisiana] State Bank was appreciated, and apparently for the protection of that institution supposed to be loyal to the U.S. govt he obtained permission bearing the signature of Abraham Lincoln, [Military] Governor [George F.] Shepley, and Dennison [*sic*] Collector of Customs to ship the cotton through New Orleans to Geo. Arnold Holt & C. Liverpool, to be sold for a/c of the Louisiana State Bank.[66]

Certainly Lincoln and the others were cleverly taken in. The ultimate outcome of the transaction is not known, but there are indications that the Stevenson cotton may well have gone through to Europe.[67]

Early in 1864 Lincoln received another proposition, this one over the signatures of George B. Waldron, a friend of Banks's, Charles K. Hawkes, a Massachusetts businessman, and Crafts J. Wright, and bearing the endorsement of Flanders, Denison, Hutchins, and other New Orleans treasury men, as well as that

[66] Broadwell to Davis, Jan. 15, 1864, Kirby Smith Papers.
[67] Cf. Banks to ——, Mar. 16, 1864, Banks Papers.

of General Banks. The application in question stated that there were many people within Confederate lines who were concealing large quantities of cotton, sugar, and other commodities from Southern authorities for fear of confiscation. These people were anxious to get their crops to market in order to have some means of supporting their families as well as "satisfying their debts to loyal Union citizens." To accomplish this they designated Waldron, Hawkes, and Wright as their agents. The proceeds of the sales would be invested in United States bonds, half of which would be withheld by the government until the end of hostilities as security for continued loyal conduct. The other half would be turned over to the owners or their agents immediately.[68] For their services Waldron and the others would receive the fees customarily paid to agents or factors in matters of this kind.[69]

Lincoln was inclined to look favorably on this plan. Banks wrote him that he saw no harm in the idea, as long as adequate guarantees were taken, and the proper agents were selected by the Federal government to carry it out.[70] Chase, however, refused to approve it. Representative George Ashmun of Massachusetts wrote to his friend Banks that

> Our friend Mr. Hawkes . . . will give you the full detail of the history and result of our demonstrations at Washington. . . . We had quite a lively time, and have developed a state of things of great interest. The President favored our general views from the first; but he has been thwarted by Mr. Chase, who seems determined to keep every possible influence in his own hands to bear upon the Presidential question.[71]

[68] Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VII, 114–15 n.; Denison, Hutchins, and others to Lincoln, Jan. —; Wright and Hawkes to Lincoln, Jan. 4, 1864, Lincoln Papers.

[69] Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VII, 116; Wright and Hawkes to Lincoln, Jan. 8 and 9, 1864, Lincoln Papers.

[70] *Com. Con. War,* p. 354.

[71] Pratt, ed., *Concerning Mr. Lincoln,* pp. 109–10. Ashmun was so interested in this affair that he considered going to New Orleans himself. *Ibid.,* pp. 111–12. Edward Hamilton to Banks, Mar. 19, 1864, Banks Papers.

Whatever the cause,[72] it was just as well that the request was refused, for Waldron, Wright, and Hawkes in reality intended to take half the proceeds of all the cotton they brought in, and not, as they had told Lincoln, merely the customary agents' commission.[73] Needless to say, their profits, if they had succeeded in winning the administration's approval, would have been enormous.

While these gentlemen failed, others did not. On December 14, 1863, President Lincoln signed the following document:

> All Military and Naval commanders will please give to the Hon. Samuel Casey, of Kentucky . . . protection and safe conduct from Cairo to Red River, and up said river, and it's [*sic*] tributaries, till he shall pass beyond our Military lines, and also give him such protection and safe conduct, on his return to our lines, back to Cairo with any cargoes he may bring; and on his safe return from beyond our lines, with said boats and tows, allow him to repeat once or twice if he shall desire.

On the same piece of stationery Casey signed an agreement in which he pledged himself neither to carry contraband into Confederate territory nor to take his boats into enemy lines at all until he had first secured "the personal pledge of Gen. Kirby Smith, given directly by him to me, that said boats and tows shall without condition, safely return to our military lines." [74]

Casey, a former member of Congress and one of the larger cotton operators on the Mississippi,[75] lost no time in getting his enterprise started. Almost immediately, however, he received the unnerving intelligence that the redoubtable David Dixon

[72] Chase may also have been irritated because the plan was presented to Lincoln first, instead of to him. Wright assured Chase (letters of Jan. 25 and 29, 1864, Chase Papers) that the plan was really for the benefit of Chase's friends.

[73] *House Rep. Com.*, 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 24, p. 83.

[74] Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln*, VII, 62–63; document under date Dec. 14, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[75] Harrington, *Banks*, p. 161; *House Rep. Com.*, 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 24, p. 117.

Porter, whose taste for prize money seldom allowed him to overlook a bale of cotton, was planning to take part of his Mississippi squadron on a foray up the Red River as soon as there was enough water. "Do not let Admiral Porter send an expedition up Red River," Casey telegraphed Lincoln urgently, "until you hear from me again. If he should he will defeat all my plans." [76] An odd situation, this—a cotton speculator trying to tell the President how to run the war so as not to interfere with his private business transactions with the enemy. Making all haste, Casey soon reached Vicksburg. On New Year's Eve he left on horseback under a flag of truce for Shreveport, accompanied by a young Louisianan named John B. Shepard.[77]

Casey found Confederate headquarters a rather flourishing commercial center. For a long time General Kirby Smith had been carrying on a thriving export-import trade, for the chief means of supporting the war in his department lay in the sale of cotton for essential supplies. The principal avenue of this commerce had been by way of the Rio Grande, but the Federal occupation of Brownsville had severely restricted the trade in that area. "The interruption of the Rio Grande trade," Smith wrote to Major General Richard Taylor, "makes the introduction of supplies through enemy lines the *sine qua non*." [78] The co-operation of Northern civil officials was obtained without much difficulty, but a stalemate resulted when Banks refused to allow supplies to be sent for the support of Confederate armies.[79] But money could do many things, and General Smith was naturally anxious to sell Confederate cotton.

Information about Casey's negotiations comes from a letter written by Samuel Simpson, who went to Shreveport as Dan-

[76] Casey to Lincoln, Dec. 19 and 21, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[77] Casey to Lincoln, Dec. 30, 1863, Lincoln Papers.

[78] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 871; see also William Diamond, "Imports of the Confederate Government from Europe and Mexico," *Journal of Southern History*, VI (1940), 497–502.

[79] Harrington, *Banks*, p. 137.

iel Dwight's agent.[80] There he learned from Kirby Smith that Casey had bought 20,000 bales at $100 a bale in sterling exchange. When Simpson, acting under Dwight's instructions, told Smith that he could not offer either gold or sterling exchange, Smith "expressed his astonishment that Simpson had been less fortunate than others, as he was daily offered sterling exchange and that Mr. Casey had seen President Lincoln himself, and obtained his sanction to the purchase." [81] The use of foreign exchange in this manner was specifically prohibited by United States Treasury Department regulations issued September 11, 1863.[82]

Having successfully concluded his agreements with the Confederates, Casey made his way back to Washington. He was not able to stay long, for late in February, John Shepard telegraphed him that his presence was urgently required at the scene of action. "Other parties interfering. Col. H. [Frank Howe?] thinks your presence necessary to save affairs." [83] A few days later the harassed Casey got word that "agents of Greek and French house in N. O. are after your purchase. Have steamboat." [84] Casey hurriedly wrote to Lincoln, inclosing Shepard's telegrams, and asked for a conference so that "we can arrange for me to leave tomorrow." [85] On the last day of February Casey secured a paper from Lincoln naming Casey,

[80] See above, p. 67.

[81] Simpson to Dwight, Mar. 11, 1864, Banks Papers.

[82] *House Exec. Doc.*, 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 3, pp. 416–22.

[83] Shepard to Casey, Feb. 22 and 24, 1864, Lincoln Papers. Shepard was in Cairo, Illinois, evidently.

[84] M. S. Casey to S. L. Casey, Feb. 29, 1864, Lincoln Papers. Through the agency of Ralli, Benachi & Co., a Greek firm, W. S. Pike and Fergus Peniston were buying cotton from Kirby Smith; they were also buying through the agency of Joseph Menard. These were probably the "Greek and French house" referred to above. A large slice of Pike's and Peniston's cotton was later seized by Porter's fleet. *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 878; LIII, 974; *O. R. N.*, XXVI, 265; documents under date April 16, 1864, Lincoln Papers; Simpson to Dwight, Mar. 11; Peniston to Banks, Mar. 30, 1864, Banks Papers.

[85] S. L. Casey to Lincoln, Feb. 25, 1864, Lincoln Papers.

Shepard, William Butler (Lincoln's old friend from Springfield), and several others as owners of cotton on the Red River, and ordering all military and naval officers to provide necessary protection for their boats "to and from their places of destination." [86] Casey hurried off to the West, later to appear, as did so many other speculators, in the wake of Banks's march on Shreveport.

Another individual who was very covetous of Louisiana cotton at this time was Benjamin F. Camp. This man typified the rascal of the period. He is reminiscent of the "Duke of Bridgewater" in *Huckleberry Finn*. Camp was a man thirty-five or forty years old, handsome, with a flowing black beard and an exceedingly glib tongue. In the spring of 1863 he appeared in Mississippi, within Confederate lines, dropping mysterious hints in a confidential manner that he was an agent of the Richmond government engaged upon a secret enterprise of great moment. According to a Confederate cotton agent, he had actually bilked the government out of several hundred bales of cotton, and later appeared in New Orleans decked out in jewelry bought with the proceeds.[87] During the winter of 1863–1864 he was said to have conferred with Chase on matters having to do with cotton,[88] and by January, 1864, he was work-

[86] "Whereas Samuel L Casey of Kentucky has made the following statements to me that John Bishop, John Ray, S. Baker[,] S. C. Floyd, Thos M Watts and John B. Shepard . . . Thos S Halloway and Joseph Turnage . . . William Butler and him self and Peter Casey are the owners of a large amount of cotton on the Red River . . . orders have been given to the commander of the confederate forces . . . to destroy all the cotton should the federate army attempt to occupy that part of the country. Believing that it would be a public injury to have the cotton destroyed, and having confidence in the integrity and ability of William Butler . . . and Samuel L Casey . . . they are hereby authorized . . . to convey to market or a place of safety said cotton," etc. This document, under date Feb. 29, 1864, in the Lincoln Papers is in Casey's handwriting and is not signed by Lincoln, but it expresses the substance of an order signed by Lincoln and presented to Banks by Casey and Butler when they arrived in northern Louisiana after the campaign had begun.

[87] Percy L. Rainwater, ed., "Excerpts from Fulkerson's Recollections of the War Between the States," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* XXIV (1937–38), 351–73.

[88] *House Rep. Com.,* 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 24, p. 80.

ing for the Treasury Department at Natchez, perhaps the most corrupt trading center on the entire Mississippi.[89] Some estimate of Camp's character can be formed from the fact that Ralph S. Hart, chief treasury agent at Natchez, who was dismissed by Chase a few months later for flagrant dishonesty,[90] complained that Camp was somewhat unscrupulous.[91] A speculator could win no higher accolade.

Early in 1864 rumors were circulating in certain quarters regarding Camp, at least according to one of Ben Butler's correspondents:

> Some two or three weeks ago, my friend, Hon. Phil. B. Fouke, mentioned to me that he was engaged in a big cotton speculation on the Western waters, and that he and his associates had managed through the agency of the rebel guerillas to procure the ownership of large quantities of cotton on the Red River, and that very soon a powerful expedition, combining both the army and navy, would be fitted out to enable them to get out their produce. . . . Upon inquiry . . . I ascertained that it was entirely as Fouke had predicted, Ben. F. Camp and Phil. B. Fouke were the principals, associated with them were Mitchell of the N. Y. *Times,* the editor of the St. Louis *Republican,* and some others. It is said that [Samuel] Hooper, M. C., of Massachusetts, furnishes the money, but of this I have not positive information.[92]

Since Camp himself was said to be part owner of the New York *Tribune,* the whole affair was quite redolent of printer's ink.

As Camp described it, the situation was as follows: His organization had canvassed northern and western Louisiana, areas held by the Confederates, and had found 500 to 700 planters who would take the loyalty oath and exchange their

[89] Futrell, "Federal Trade with the Confederate States," pp. 318–23.

[90] *Ibid.*, pp. 321–22.

[91] Hart to Chase, Jan. 28, 1864, Chase Papers.

[92] Marshall, ed., *Butler Correspondence,* IV, 111 (S. A. Whitely to Butler, April 20, 1864). For further information concerning Fouke see *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 257–58, 267; *Biographical Dictionary of the American Congress* (Washington, 1950), pp. 273, 1177. Fouke turned up at Alexandria in March seeking the release of cotton seized by the army. See Fouke to Banks, Mar. 29, 1864, Banks Papers.

cotton for supplies. Fifty thousand to 100,000 bales would thus be secured, and this quantity would bring $30,000,000 to $40,000,000 in gold. Camp and his followers would sell this gold to the treasury, building up its supply of bullion, and taking in exchange twenty-five per cent of the sum in greenbacks and the rest in twenty-year six-per-cent bonds. Camp also claimed that he was a special agent of the Treasury Department and had "instructions" from President Lincoln, but apparently he had no documents to prove his statements.[93] At any rate, he too was to appear in the Promised Land after the campaign had begun.

Not long before he was to start for the Red River, Banks finally decided upon the course he would follow in regulating commercial matters. "I have reflected upon this subject," he told Flanders, "day and night for three months, with an earnest desire to adopt some course which should be consistent with the interests of the Government. . . ." The decision he reached had no new ideas in it; he simply reverted to the plan he described in his unsent letter to Lincoln of February 2.[94] There were, Banks told Supervisor Flanders, some 105,000 bales of cotton along the Red River owned by the Confederate government. If loyal persons on either side of the military lines were allowed to bring in without restriction cotton that they claimed to have bought, the door would be opened to the clandestine shipment of this Confederate cotton to New Orleans and thence to Europe, where it would of course be sold to help support the Southern cause. Banks would not sanction any system that made such an occurrence possible. Instead he proposed to allow loyal persons to ship to New Orleans cotton that had never been Confederate property, provided that one-third of the proceeds should be withheld by the Treasury Department until it

[93] James Bowen to Banks, April 19, 1864, Banks Papers.
[94] See above, pp. 64–66.

was established that no part of the money realized from the cotton would be used for purposes inimical to the United States. All Confederate-owned cotton found by the army would be sold and the proceeds paid into the treasury, with the exception of fees paid to persons such as the McKees in return for locating and identifying it.[95]

Since these proposals, as was usual with those emanating from Banks, were not in accordance with treasury regulations, Flanders sent them on to Chase for approval. Personally, Flanders said, he was in favor of giving the plan a trial, for it seemed likely to bring in a large amount of cotton at a small cost. "Gen. Banks takes the responsibility," he concluded, "and I will not distrust the result." [96]

Banks of course did not wait for clearance from the Treasury Department, but proceeded to issue a small number of permits under what might be called his one-third withholding plan. In addition, he gave an unconditional permit to Charles K. Hawkes to bring in and sell some 4800 bales, a large number of which lay in the Red River country. Another permit was given to a Mr. Miltenberger to bring through the lines 3000 bales belonging to the Louisiana State Bank, with the stipulation that the proceeds could be used to pay debts due to the state of Louisiana, and to retire the currency of the bank, but for no other purposes whatever.[97] Probably the worst that Banks could be charged with here, aside from the extralegal nature of the whole affair, was favoritism toward Hawkes, Ashmun's protégé.[98] Even there Banks may not have been re-

[95] Banks to Flanders, Mar. 21, 1864, Banks Papers.

[96] Flanders to Chase, Mar. 25, 1864, Flanders Letterbooks, Third Special Agency Papers, Treasury Department, National Archives.

[97] Smith-Brady Report, p. 204; James Bowen to Banks, Mar. 29; permits under dates Mar. 14 and 16, 1864, Banks Papers. This Louisiana State Banks cotton appears to have had no connection with the John A. Stevenson cotton mentioned above.

[98] Pratt, ed., *Concerning Mr. Lincoln,* pp. 109–10; George Ashmun to Lincoln. Feb. 1, 1864, Lincoln Papers.

sponsible.[99] With regard to the other part of the program as explained to Flanders, J. H. McKee was given a pass through the lines to Alexandria, presumably to confer with his Confederate cousin concerning the cotton that was to be betrayed into the hands of the Federals.[100] Precautions were taken to prevent the inevitable swarms of speculators from stampeding to the Red River,[101] but this task was hopeless from the outset.

Taken together, these arrangements formed the basis of Banks's commercial policy as he prepared for the opening of the campaign. The intention underlying them was the general's desire to act in the best interests of the country, and although circumstances forced a number of changes in policy, there is no evidence to show that Banks ever allowed personal considerations to overcome his prudence.

[99] Three months later Hawkes claimed he had a permit from Lincoln to bring cotton out. Hawkes to Capt. Foster, June 10, 1864, Banks Papers.

[100] Banks's pass to McKee under date Mar. 11, 1864, Banks Papers.

[101] Banks to S. B. Holabird, Mar. 18, 1864, Banks Papers; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 636, 641.

CHAPTER III

*

The Campaign Begins

*

IN THE NORTH the new year 1864 was welcomed with a feeling of confident optimism. The Confederacy had been driven close to the verge of defeat; it was the beginning of the end.[1] Bloodily repulsed at Gettysburg, shattered at Vicksburg and Chattanooga, Southern armies everywhere stood on the defensive, reduced in numbers and crippled for want of transport and supplies. The most ominous sign of decay was in the relative strength of the major armies. Along the Rapidan Lee had only 38,000 present for duty with which to hold back 73,000 officers and men commanded by the resourceful Meade.[2] Flung from the heights of Missionary Ridge and Lookout Mountain by Grant, the Army of Tennessee was outnumbered two to one by Union forces based on Chattanooga.[3] So thin were Confederate ranks that Sherman was able to march with the utmost impunity almost entirely across the state of Mississippi, from Vicksburg to Meridian. All these things appeared to portend an early collapse. So auspicious were the omens, in

[1] "The Beginning of the End, a Greeting for the New Year," *Atlantic Monthly,* III (1864), 112–22; Morse, ed., *Welles Diary,* I, 499, 500 (entry of Dec. 31, 1863); Allan Nevins and Milton H. Thomas, eds., *The Diary of George Templeton Strong* (New York, 1952), III, 387; James G. Randall, *Lincoln the President* (New York, 1945–52), III, 390.

[2] Douglas Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography* (New York, 1934–35), III, 253 n.; *O. R.,* XXXIII, 462.

[3] Joseph E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations* (New York, 1874), pp. 272–86.

fact, that Northern opinion tended to advance from a justifiable hopefulness to dangerous overconfidence. The South was clearly declining in power, but it still possessed, unknown to many, astonishing reserves of vitality. Halleck realized this, and he complained to Grant in January that "our people . . . are acting in the mistaken supposition that the war is nearly ended, and that we shall hereafter have to contend only with fragments of broken and demoralized rebel armies. Such is the tone of the public press and the debates in Congress." [4]

It was in the midst of this atmosphere of optimism that Northern plans for the coming campaigns, including the Red River expedition, were laid. The four major campaigns envisioned by the Union high command depended for their success upon the capture of four cities: Richmond, Atlanta, Mobile, and Shreveport. Operations in Georgia and Virginia naturally were of paramount importance, although Grant was also extremely anxious to see Mobile in Federal hands. The march up the Red River on Shreveport and Texas had in effect been ordered by Halleck in January, and by March 12, the day when Grant became general-in-chief with the rank of lieutenant general, the campaign had begun and Grant made no attempt to call a halt at that late date. He did indeed think the expedition could serve a useful purpose in pushing the Southerners farther away from the Mississippi and making that river less difficult to defend; but under no circumstances did he want the troops involved to be withheld from the operations east of the Mississippi when the major campaigns began.[5] As it turned out, the Red River expedition, militarily the least important of all, was to have serious repercussions on the other theaters of war, prolonging the conflict for many bloody and unnecessary weeks.[6]

[4] *O. R.*, XXXII, Part ii, 122.
[5] See below, pp. 83, 105–106.
[6] See below, pp. 278–79.

Such was the general strategic situation when Banks, for reasons that have already been described, finally acquiesced in Halleck's pet project, the advance up the Red. In accordance with the general-in-chief's wishes, Banks began to correspond with Steele, commanding in Arkansas, Sherman, and Admiral Porter, as well as Halleck himself, in an effort to formulate some co-ordinated plan of campaign.[7] The distances involved and the complicated nature of the correspondence placed formidable, though under the circumstances unavoidable, obstacles in the way of efficient planning.

On January 25 Banks sent Captain Robert T. Dunham as the bearer of a letter to Steele asking the latter for a "statement of your position and the concentration of forces that may be possible" for a movement against Shreveport.[8] Dunham also carried a dispatch to Sherman containing a similar inquiry regarding his ability to co-operate.[9] Banks reported these actions to Halleck a few days later and represented himself as still awaiting definite instructions from army headquarters concerning the actual initiation of the campaign.[10] He was moved to do this because Halleck had not given him or anyone else a clear-cut military order. It would have been simple enough for the general-in-chief to say, as the responsibilities of his position required, "Take your troops and move up the Red River in co-operation with Sherman and Steele at the earliest possible date"; but that was not his way. As Banks remarked after it was all over, "the difficulty in regard to this expedition was that nobody assumed to give orders."[11] To make matters worse, Halleck was unable to assign any officer to the general command of a campaign that involved the use of troops from three different military departments, although even Banks pointed

[7] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 10.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 149.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 144.
[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 179, 266.
[11] *Com. Con. War*, p. 19.

out the need for a unified command. "We fully agree," Halleck wrote Sherman some time later, "that the Departments of Arkansas and the Gulf should be under one commander as soon as the armies come within communicating distance, but the difficulty is to get a suitable commander. General Banks is not competent, and there are so many political objections to superseding him by Steele that it would be useless to ask the President to do it." [12]

Banks's reasonable request for specific orders evoked from Halleck a typically nebulous and irritable rejoinder. If Banks thought he was going to get any orders as to what he should do, he said, then he was laboring under a misapprehension. He had communicated to Lincoln and Stanton the substance of the dispatches that had passed between them, and it was "understood" that he would only state his views and leave Banks free to "adopt such lines and plans of campaign" as he might think best.[13] It seems quite evident that this was all Halleck's idea—to transfer to a subordinate all responsibility for decisions and for any possible reverses that might occur. His reference to alternative lines of advance was utterly without meaning. He had already severely criticized Banks's operations on the Texas coast; the only line of advance left was the one he had been insisting upon for over a year—the Red River. On no other line would Banks be able to co-operate with Steele's advance from Arkansas. In short, Halleck's condition was normal: he was trying to avoid the responsibility involved in giving orders. In addition, the suspicion arises that perhaps he had sensed some possible disaster awaiting Banks in the lonely pine forests of Louisiana, especially since, by his own admission, he believed Banks to be unfit for command in the field.

While Banks was carrying on this frustrating correspondence, General Sherman, who began his Meridian expedition

[12] *O. R.*, XXXII, Part iii, 289 (letter of April 8, 1864).
[13] *Ibid.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 293 (letter of Feb. 11, 1864).

toward the last of January, was writing to Steele and to Grant expressing his strong desire to participate in a drive on Shreveport.[14] Sherman, in fact, fairly itched to march up the Red.[15] Grant, who was not sure when the expedition would start or what troops would participate, was informed by Halleck that the plan was for Banks and Sherman to advance along the Red, while Steele marched on Shreveport from the north. Sherman had agreed to this, but Steele had not yet been heard from.[16] This was the first time Grant learned that troops were to be taken from east of the Mississippi, and it was a bitter pill. Grant sent copies of his correspondence with the general-in-chief to Sherman, telling him in a covering letter that while he realized the great importance of the expedition, he regretted that any of the troops had to be taken from Sherman's department. Unless you go with them, he said, I am afraid that any troops sent "will be permanently lost from this command." [17] It was beyond his authority to order Sherman not to send the men, Grant continued, but he did require that their number be held to a minimum and that they return east of the Mississippi as quickly as possible.

Having thus received Grant's reluctant consent, Sherman traveled down the river to New Orleans to confer with Banks. He arrived in the city on March 2 and found that while nearly all preparations for the campaign had been completed, Banks could devote no time to military affairs until after the inauguration of Michael Hahn, the newly elected Union Governor of Louisiana. "General Banks urged me to remain over the 4th of March," Sherman recalled in his memoirs, "to participate in the ceremonies, which he explained would include the performance of the 'Anvil Chorus' by all the bands of his army,

[14] *Ibid.,* XXXII, Part ii, 169, 189–90, 201–202, 270–71.

[15] Possibly this desire was related to the fact that he had been superintendent of the Seminary of Learning near Alexandria and knew the country well.

[16] *O. R.,* XXXII, Part ii, 402 (telegram of Feb. 16, 1864).

[17] *Ibid.,* pp. 224–25 (letter of Feb. 18, 1864).

and during the performance the church-bells were to be rung, and cannons were to be fired by electricity. I regarded all such ceremonies as out of place at a time when it seemed to me every hour and minute were due to the war." [18] Sherman left the next day.

One piece of information that Sherman had picked up, aside from the details of the gala inaugural festivities, was that Banks intended to command the expedition in the field.[19] "I wanted to go up Red River," he wrote his wife a few days later, "but as Banks was to command in person I thought it best not to go." Grant had wanted him to command, but as "Banks ranks Grant and myself," this was clearly impossible.[20] As a matter of fact, Banks and Butler outranked every other officer then in the field.[21]

If Sherman was unwilling to go himself, he at least defined, in his conference with Banks, the extent of the assistance he could give to coming operations in Louisiana. He agreed to send 10,000 men up the Red in time to reach Alexandria by March 17, in concert with a naval force under Admiral Porter. He stipulated, however, that these troops must be taken no farther than Shreveport and must be returned to him by about April 15.[22] Porter's co-operation was assured, since he had decided some weeks ago to participate in the campaign "with every ironclad vessel in the fleet." [23]

[18] Sherman, *Memoirs,* I, 425–26.

[19] Porter's fleet and Steele's troops were, of course, never under Banks's command.

[20] M. A. De Wolfe Howe, ed., *Home Letters of General Sherman* (New York, 1909), pp. 286–87.

[21] Banks and Butler were both commissioned major general of volunteers on May 16, 1861; Grant on Feb. 16, 1862; and Sherman on May 1, 1862. Even McClellan's commission (regular army) dated only from May 14, 1861. Thomas H. S. Hamersly, comp. and ed., *Complete Army Register,* Part i, p. 513; Part ii, pp. 5, 16, 42, 97. As mentioned above, Grant was made lieutenant general on Mar. 12, 1864.

[22] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part ii, 481, 494, 496.

[23] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 747–48.

After Sherman's visit to New Orleans, General Steele was the only remaining figure who had not yet committed himself to the grand strategic combination being erected in the Department of the Gulf. And that officer was beset by many difficulties. He could not move as early in March as Banks wished, because an election of state officers had been ordered for March 14, and, to quote Steele, "the President is very anxious it should be a success. Without the assistance of the troops to distribute the poll-books, with the oath of allegiance, and to protect the voters at the polls, it cannot succeed." [24] ("If we have to modify military plans for civil elections," Sherman commented when he saw this, "we had better go home." [25]) Moreover part of his command had returned home on veteran furloughs, and as "matters in the Army are influenced so much by political intrigue, it is not certain that these troops will return to my command." [26] Roads were bad if not impassable, guerillas were active, and the country was destitute of all forage.[27] So numerous and forbidding were the obstacles that Steele foresaw that he attempted to withdraw an earlier offer of direct co-operation and proposed instead that he make a mere demonstration, a southward feint, in the hope that it would lessen Confederate resistance in Banks's front.[28] By this time Halleck had been superseded as general-in-chief by Grant, who solved the problem with little ado. "Move your force in full cooperation with General N. P. Banks' attack on Shreveport," he telegraphed Steele on March 15. "A mere demonstration will not be sufficient." [29]

Steele's reception of this message marked the completion of the preliminary arrangements for the campaign. All the Fed-

[24] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 448.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 516.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 246.
[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 246, 519, 547, 576.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 576.
[29] *Ibid.*, p. 616.

eral land and naval forces were at last poised for attack.

At Shreveport, headquarters of the vast domain called by the Southerners, with majestic imprecision, the Trans-Mississippi Department, the Confederate high command had for a long time anticipated an enemy thrust up the valley of the Red. As early as June, 1863, Lieutenant General E. Kirby Smith, commanding the department, had expected such a move to follow on the heels of Confederate defeat at Vicksburg and Port Hudson.[30] A month later Major General Richard Taylor, whose responsibility was the District of Western Louisiana, acknowledged the ability of the Federals to "throw their gunboats and transports into the very heart of Western Louisiana." [31] Such expectations continued through the fall of 1863,[32] and by January 4 Kirby Smith felt that he could predict with some confidence that the Red River would be invaded as soon as the stage of water became high enough to allow navigation by Northern shipping.[33] Taylor, upon whom the greatest burden of defense was to fall, concluded in mid-January from his own excellent sources of information that "it is well understood that the next expedition from New Orleans will move on the Red River; this as soon as there is a permanent rise in the water." [34]

When news of Sherman's Meridian expedition arrived in February, Confederate prognostications became more tentative in tone; it began to look as if Mobile might be the next major objective of Union forces in the Mississippi Valley. As spring approached and the general strategic situation became more apparent, Smith and Taylor became progressively more baffled as to the enemy's intentions. While all the signs pointed to an early advance on Shreveport, it was difficult to believe, as Tay-

30 *Ibid.*, XXVI, Part ii, 41–42.
31 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
32 *Ibid.*, pp. 293–94, 322, 338, 341–42.
33 *Ibid.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 819.
34 *Ibid.*

lor put it, that Grant would "permit any of his forces under his command [35] to leave the principal theater of operations, yet common sense forbids the idea that Banks would move from the Teche as a base without Sherman's cooperation." [36] Kirby Smith agreed. "I still think," he wrote Taylor on March 13, "that the enemy cannot be so infatuated as to occupy a large force in this department when every man should be employed east of the river, where the result of the campaign this summer must be decisive of our future for our weal or woe." [37] Halleck's strategy could scarcely have received a more devastating indictment. "Infatuated"—that was meant for him.

However incredible they might seem, the portents of impending invasion were too clear to be ignored, and the Southerners began to take such precautions as they could against the trials of the future. Early in March, Kirby Smith ordered cavalry units from Major General John B. Magruder's District of Texas to march for Alexandria, Louisiana.[38] Simultaneously, Richard Taylor began to concentrate his scanty and widely scattered troops. The brigade of Prince Camille Polignac was ordered from Trinity on the Ouachita to Alexandria, where it joined the brigade commanded by Colonel Henry Gray. The country between Marksville and Simmesport was occupied by Major General John G. Walker's division of Texans.[39] Aside from entertaining briefly the idea of attacking a Federal outpost at Plaquemine, Taylor was necessarily limited to defensive preparations.[40]

Among other things, Taylor ordered Fort De Russy, on the Red not far from Marksville, to be pushed to completion as quickly as possible. These instructions by Taylor reflected no

[35] That is, Sherman's men.
[36] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 489.
[37] *Ibid.,* p. 494.
[38] *Ibid.,* pp. 479, 494; Part ii, 1027.
[39] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 154–55.
[40] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 574.

confidence on his part in this type of fixed fortification, and in fact Fort De Russy had been begun by the express order of Kirby Smith over Taylor's objections.[41] Differences over the construction of De Russy, indeed, were not the only source of unpleasantness between Smith and Zachary Taylor's son.[42] High-strung, irritable, and extremely intelligent, Dick Taylor had come to have an abiding dislike and contempt for his chief and the policies he pursued.

> The commander of the "Trans-Mississippi Department" [Taylor commented acidly after the war] displayed much ardor in the establishment of bureaux, and on a scale proportional rather to the extent of his territory than to the smallness of his force. His staff surpassed in numbers that of Von Moltke during the war with France; and, to supply the demands of bureaux and staff, constant details from the infantry were called for, to the great discontent of officers in the field. Hydrocephalus at Shreveport produced atrophy elsewhere.[43]

In justice to Kirby Smith it must be said that Dick Taylor was not the easiest man in the world to get along with. Many years ago his father had described him as being very affectionate but somewhat quick-tempered.[44] He had, one of his friends remarked, "a total irreverence for any man's opinion," a deep affection for those he admired, and contempt for those whose conduct he thought unworthy. Educated at Harvard and Yale, well-read and widely traveled, he was an enthusiastic student of military history, a fact that helped to compensate for his lack of formal military training. He was elected colonel of the 9th Louisiana Infantry at the outbreak of the war and promoted to brigadier general in October, 1861. The following

[41] *Ibid.*, pp. 575–76; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 148–49.
[42] For example, see *O. R.,* XXVI, Part ii, 394–95.
[43] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 153.
[44] Holman Hamilton, *Zachary Taylor, Soldier in the White House* (Indianapolis, 1951), p. 27.

spring he received invaluable training while campaigning with the great Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. Completely self-reliant, a firm disciplinarian, he was calmness personified in battle.[45] One of the men who marched and fought with him remarked that "Taylor is a very quiet, unassuming little fellow, but noisy on retreats, with a tendency to cuss mules and wagons which stall in the road." [46] Probably the basic cause of the antagonism between Smith and Taylor—and Taylor was by far the more bitter—was a clash of temperaments. Aggravated by a series of misunderstandings and disagreements, this antagonism became so pronounced that by early 1864 Taylor wished to leave the department, and before the end of spring he was to find it impossible to contain his wrath any longer.

The explosion might have come sooner, but on March 12 General Scurry hastily scrawled off a note announcing that the Federals were landing at Simmesport.[47] Personal quarrels had to be submerged in the presence of a common enemy.

On March 10, three days later than originally planned, 10,000 men from Sherman's army were dispatched from Vicksburg under the command of Brigadier General Andrew J. Smith, a hard-bitten old army man.[48] The long line of transports, all twenty-one densely packed with soldiers from hurricane to boiler deck, wound its way down the sinuous Mississippi, headed for the mouth of the Red. Natchez was left

[45] Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command* (New York, 1942–44), I, 263 n., 349; Dabney H. Maury, "Sketch of General Richard Taylor," *Southern Historical Society Papers,* VII (1879), 343–45.

[46] Napier Bartlett, *Military Record of Louisiana* (New Orleans, 1875), "The Trans-Mississippi," p. 11.

[47] Scurry to Walker, Mar. 12, 1864, John G. Walker Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part ii, 1036. Brig. Gen. W. R. Scurry commanded a brigade in Walker's division.

[48] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 168, Part ii, 545; Walter G. Smith, ed., *Life and Letters of Thomas Kilby Smith* (New York and London, 1898), p. 356.

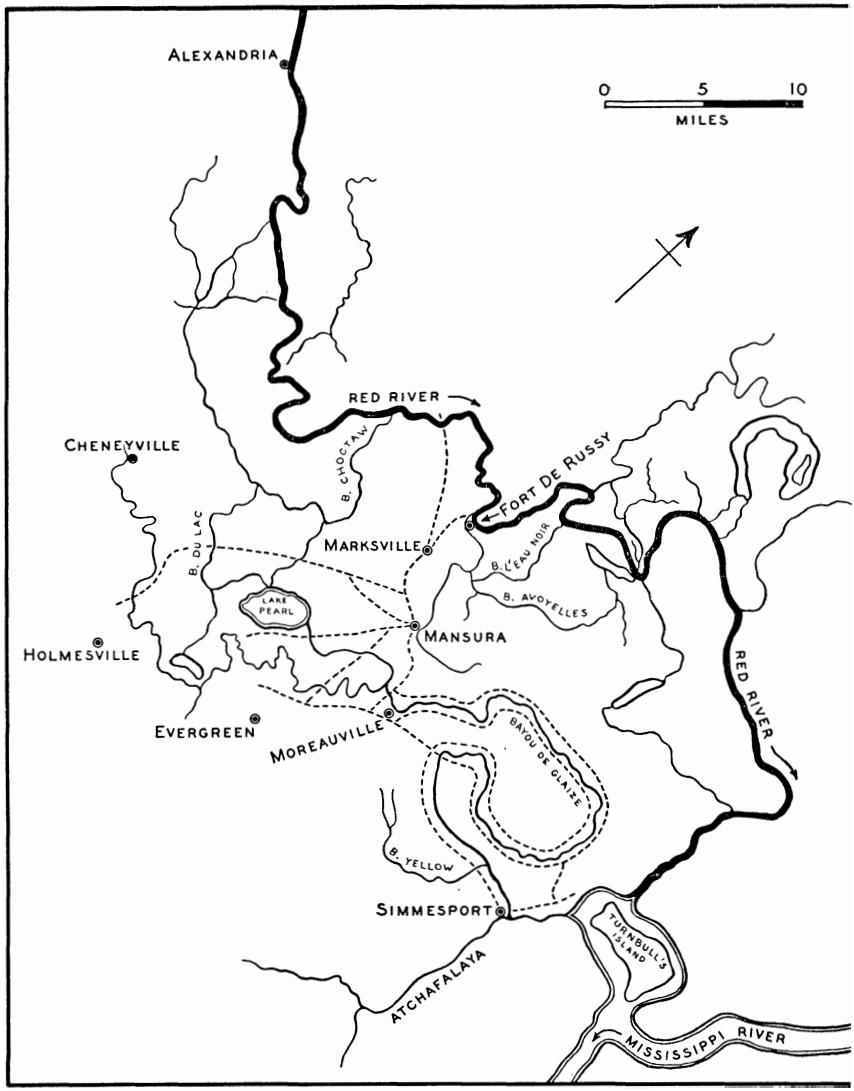


FIGURE 2. Red River between the Mississippi and Alexandria

behind by daylight of the 11th, and by nightfall the boats had joined the war vessels of Admiral Porter in Old River.[49] Some of the men went ashore that night, brought in a good supply of hogs and chickens, and robbed and burned a large dwelling. On the following day A. J. Smith took his transports into Atchafalaya Bayou and disembarked at Simmesport, where another house was sacrificed to the incendiary instincts of some Federal soldier.[50] This movement up the Atchafalaya was the first step in the approach to Fort De Russy. While A. J. Smith marched on the fort from the rear, Porter was to take his ironclads up the Red and bombard the water batteries from the river.[51]

Walker's division was directly in the path of the Federal advance. When he first heard of the enemy landing at Simmesport, Walker pushed forward Scurry's brigade to a half-completed fortification on Yellow Bayou called Fort Humbug by the men who occupied it.[52] Almost immediately, however, disheartening news came in regarding the strength of the Union column. Fifteen thousand to 17,000 strong, it was said to be, with thirty or forty guns. Feeling that he could not successfully oppose this host with his 3800 effectives and twelve pieces of artillery, Walker pulled his men back from Fort Humbug, which was virtually worthless anyway because of the drying up of the surrounding swamps, and began to retreat. My position, the Texan later reported to Dick Taylor, was "extremely hazardous, inasmuch as I was on an island formed by Red River, Bayou De Glaize, Du Lac, and Choc-

[49] John Scott, *Story of the Thirty Second Iowa* (Nevada, Ia., 1896), p. 130; Edmund Newsome, *Experience in the War of the Great Rebellion* (Carbondale, Ill., 1880), p. 111; Smith, ed., *T. Kilby Smith,* p. 356.

[50] Newsome, *Experience in the War,* pp. 111-12.

[51] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 304.

[52] Joseph P. Blessington, *The Campaigns of Walker's Texas Division* (New York, 1875), pp. 166–67.

taw, the only outlet to which was Bayou Du Lac bridge, 8 miles to the south." [53] In this position Walker felt that to protect the rear of Fort De Russy would be to invite disaster. "By falling back, however, toward Bayou Du Lac and watching the movements of the enemy I was in hopes of finding an opportunity of attacking him should he march upon Fort De Russy with less than his entire strength." [54] Walker ended by doing little to impede the march of the Yankees. This must be attributed in large part to his overestimation of the enemy's strength, but since his scanty force of cavalry, only three companies, had been cut off east of the Atchafalaya by the Federal landing at Simmesport, Walker's error in this respect is understandable.[55]

On the morning of March 13, A. J. Smith sent out a reconnaissance in force on the Fort Humbug road. A few Confederates who had lingered too long were captured, together with some mules and oxen, but no large body of troops was encountered.[56] As soon as he learned the results of the reconnaissance, Smith disembarked his land transportation, sent his transports to join Porter's squadron, and set his entire command on the road to Fort De Russy.[57]

After crossing Bayou de Glaise, the column entered the beautiful Avoyelles prairie. Brigadier General Thomas Kilby Smith, commanding the Provisional Division of the 17th Corps, recorded his impressions of the countryside in a letter to his wife. "Ascending a slight elevation," he wrote, "we suddenly emerged in one of the most beautiful prairies imaginable. High table land, gently undulating, watered by exquisite lakes[,] occasional groves, the landscape dotted with tasteful

[53] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 599.
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, pp. 155–56.
[56] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 305; Cloyd Bryner, *The Story of the Illinois 47th* (Springfield, 1905), p. 99; Newsome, *Experience in the War*, pp. 112–13; Scott, *32d Iowa*, p. 131.
[57] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 305.

houses, gardens and shrubberies. This prairie, called Avoyelles, is settled exclusively by French *émigrés,* many of whom, as our army passed, sought shelter under the tricolor of France." [58]

The head of the column entered the Creole town of Marksville early in the afternoon of the 14th, some of the bluecoats entertaining the inhabitants with a bellowed rendition of "Rally Round the Flag, Boys" as they marched down the street.[59] Three miles beyond Marksville lay Fort De Russy. As his command approached this much-touted Confederate Gibraltar, A. J. Smith ordered the First and Second Brigades, Third Division, 16th Corps, to form line of battle. These two brigades straddled the Marksville - De Russy road. After some preliminary maneuvering under a rather hot fire from several Southern field guns in the fort, not to mention a few dangerously errant shells from Porter's fleet as it bombarded the fort from the river, at six o'clock the order was given to charge. Brigadier General Joseph A. Mower, commanding the Third Division, led the attack in person, and the pitifully small garrison of 300 Confederates was immediately overwhelmed.[60] Porter's flagship *Black Hawk* appeared soon after the surrender, and A. J. Smith received the Admiral's congratulations. As night fell a cold norther swept over the field.[61] Union losses at De Russy reached a grand total of thirty-eight killed and wounded,[62] giving the whole episode the character of a skirmish rather than a battle, although the tone of Colonel Lynch's grandiloquent report was pitched to something comparable to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks.[63]

The next day Mower's detachment of the 16th Corps re-embarked on its transports and, in company with Porter's fleet,

[58] Smith, ed., *T. Kilby Smith,* p. 357.
[59] Newsome, *Experience in the War,* pp. 113–14.
[60] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 305, 338–39; Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 132.
[61] Smith, ed., *T. Kilby Smith,* p. 358.
[62] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 305.
[63] See *ibid.,* pp. 338–39 for Lynch's report.

steamed up the river to take possession of Alexandria.[64] A. J. Smith remained at De Russy with Kilby Smith's command, which was put to work razing the fort, tearing out and burning wooden beams, and leveling earthworks. This work consumed several days and was climaxed by the detonation of the magazine, an operation that was badly botched by someone. The explosion took place in the dead of night while many of the Federals were sleeping in the vicinity of the fort. One unwilling witness described his experience after being jolted awake by an earthshaking roar:

> I knew what it was in an instant, for I could see shells bursting high in the air, the whole heavens seemed to be on fire, pieces of timber and hard lumps of earth were falling in camp and even beyond. Men were running for life to the woods. . . . There was scarcely time to think before another magazine blew up, followed by a shower of fragments. . . . Two men were killed and several wounded, just in wantoness of the commanding general.[65]

So embittered were the men that they even went so far as to hiss A. J. Smith as he rode by a few days later.[66] That was understandable, seeing that they had been literally hoisted by their own petard.

When the leading vessels of the Federal fleet reached Alexandria on the afternoon of Tuesday, March 15, they found that the coop was empty and the birds had flown that same morning. Taylor personally superintended the evacuation of the town, seeing to it that all public property was loaded on steamers and sent above the shallows and rapids that partially obstructed the river at that place. Through a miscalculation of the pilot, one boat ran aground and had to be burned. Besides

[64] *Ibid.*, p. 306.

[65] Newsome, *Experience in the War,* pp. 115–16; Smith, ed., *T. Kilby Smith,* p. 358; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 378.

[66] Losing his temper at the hisses, groans, and taunts of his men, A. J. Smith "swore that he would put those two regiments on boats and then they might go to H—— a warm place if they wished." Newsome, *Experience in the War,* p. 122.

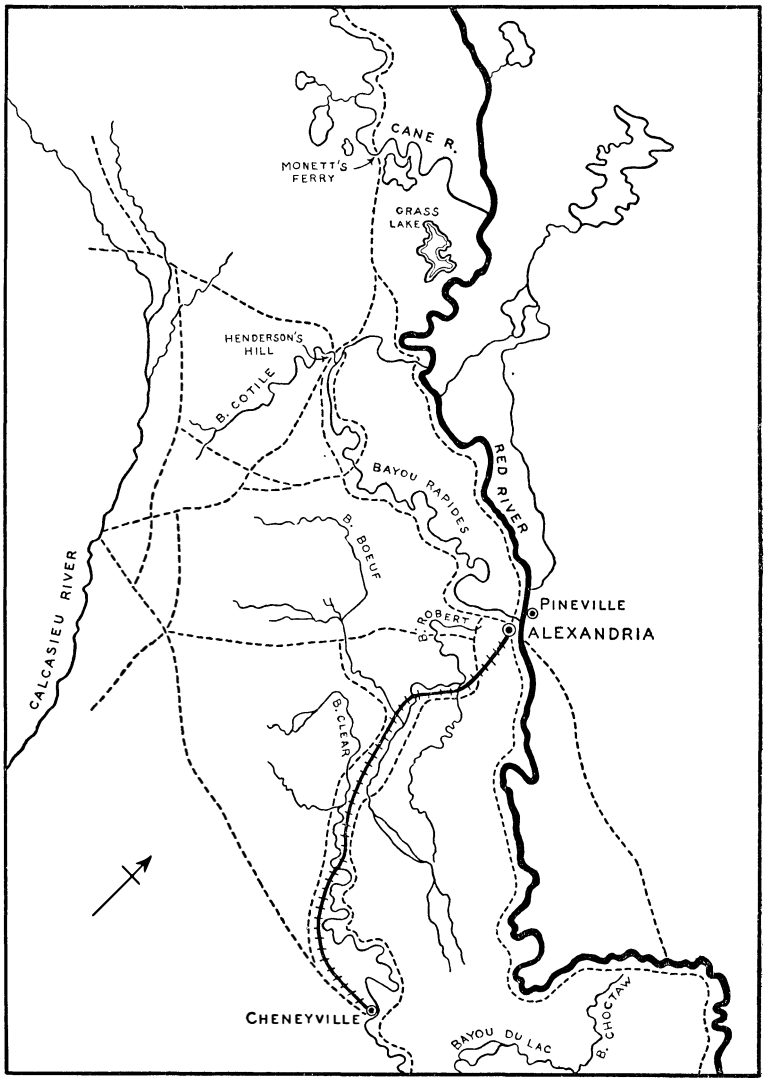


FIGURE 3. Vicinity of Alexandria

this vessel, the only loss sustained by the Confederates was three field pieces left a short distance above the town through an oversight.[67]

After abandoning Alexandria to chance and the whims of the invaders, Taylor joined the main body of his troops on the Boeuf, twenty-five miles to the south. Here were Polignac's and Gray's brigades, which were shortly united as a division under the command of Alfred Mouton, son of ex-Governor Mouton of Louisiana.[68] Sending word to General Walker at Bayou du Lac that he intended to withdraw in the direction of Natchitoches, Taylor set his column in motion. Word came from Colonel William G. Vincent that Banks's army had started northward from Franklin, and Vincent was then ordered to join Mouton with his mounted regiment. Taylor now had a force of about 7000 men.[69]

At Carroll Jones's, the establishment of a wealthy free Negro, there was one of the numerous depots of forage that Taylor,[70] with commendable foresight, had established at intervals along the roads that ran through the barren lands that divided the watersheds of the Sabine and the Red. Here Taylor paused in his retrograde movement, and, with his two divisions of infantry once more united, set a watch on the Federals in Alexandria. The almost utter lack of a cavalry arm, which had greatly hindered Taylor in his efforts to discover what the enemy intended to do, was somewhat alleviated by the arrival on March 19 of Vincent's regiment. This command was sent forward to Bayou Rapides, twelve miles away and twenty miles above Alexandria, where it began skirmishing with advance

[67] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 506, 561; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 156.

[68] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 156.

[69] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 496, 500, 578. Vincent had been on the Teche, in southern Louisiana, watching Banks.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 561. In this dispatch to Kirby Smith, Taylor unequivocally states that he (Taylor) established these depots, but in his report of June 11 to the War Department Kirby Smith appears to enter a conflicting claim to the origination of this system of supply. See *ibid.*, p. 478.

elements of the Union army. On the night of March 21, cursing the rain and hail that descended on them, Vincent's men camped at Henderson's Hill, near the confluence of Bayous Rapides and Cotile. Here they were overtaken by humiliating disaster. A. J. Smith had sent out a heavy reconnaissance force consisting of six regiments of infantry and a brigade of Banks's cavalry that had just arrived, the whole being commanded by General Mower. Marching out to Henderson's Hill, Mower found a way through the morass that almost surrounded Vincent's position, with mud belly deep to the horses in places, and directed part of his troops to make a demonstration in front of the position while the rest attacked from the rear. Creeping up the rain-drenched hill, the Federals captured many pickets without firing a shot, and most of Vincent's men were taken totally by surprise, with no chance to make any effective resistance. By this brilliant coup, Mower captured some 250 prisoners, scores of horses, and William Edgar's four-gun battery, at one stroke depriving Taylor of almost all his cavalry at a time when it was most needed.[71] "In truth," commented Taylor, "my horse was too ill disciplined for close work." [72] As for the captured men, they complained that the whole affair was a mean Yankee trick—not sporting at all.[73]

The Federal cavalry brigade that took part in the debacle at Henderson's Hill was as yet the only portion of Banks's army to reach Alexandria, although as Sherman told Porter, Banks had assured him that his men would arrive before Sherman's.[74] Banks, however, as befitted his real profession, was thoroughly

[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 315–16, 323–24, 334–35, 463–64, 501; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 157; Blessington, *Walker's Division,* p. 178; James K. Ewer, *The Third Massachusetts Cavalry in the War for the Union* (Maplewood, Mass., 1903), pp. 137–39.

[72] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 157.

[73] William H. Stewart Diary, p. 10, typescript copy of manuscript diary, both in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

[74] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 41.

engrossed in politics.[75] The grand church-bell Anvil Chorus inauguration of Michael Hahn on March 5 was evidently a howling success.[76] So stupendous was the spectacle, Banks wrote Halleck, that it was "impossible to describe it with truth";[77] many events of the coming campaign were to be surrounded with a similar difficulty.

Despite these distractions, Banks managed to get his cavalry division started on the overland march to Alexandria on March 7. Brigadier General Albert L. Lee commanded these 5000 troopers, and in the van rode the brigade of Colonel N. A. M. ("Gold Lace") Dudley.[78] Torrential rains on the 8th had removed the bottoms from the roads in southern Louisiana and delayed the departure of the infantry, which was under the immediate direction of General Franklin. Almost a week was required for the roads to dry out sufficiently and it was March 15 when the column finally set out from the town of Franklin on the long march to the Red.[79] The head of Lee's column, which had passed through Franklin on the 13th and 14th, rode down the main street of Alexandria at nine o'clock Sunday morning, March 20.[80]

Plodding on the track of the cavalry at an average rate of seventeen miles a day,[81] Franklin's 15,000 infantry and artillery traversed an Arcadian countryside unique in its romantic beauty. The first part of the route lay along Bayou Teche, with its deep placid water and graceful curves, winding through level fields that before war came had been thick with sugar

[75] Cf. *Com. Con. War,* pp. 28–29.

[76] B. F. Stevenson, *Letters from the Army 1862–1864* (Cincinnati, 1886), p. 307.

[77] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part ii, 513.

[78] H. B. Sprague, *History of the 13th Infantry Regiment of Connecticut Volunteers* (Hartford, 1867), p. 186.

[79] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part ii, 426–27, 544–45; *Com. Con. War,* p. 28.

[80] Ewer, *3d Mass. Cavalry,* p. 136.

[81] T. H. Bringhurst and Frank Swigart, *History of the Forty-Sixth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry* (Logansport, 1888), pp. 85–86.

cane. Great live oaks and orange groves surrounded the mansions of planters who not too many months ago had been the lords of creation in their particular corner of the world. As the army reached the valley of the upper Teche, where the Federals passed through such towns as Grand Coteau, Opelousas, and Washington with flags fluttering and bands blaring,[82] the character of the country changed. Here the road crossed the eastern part of the prairies named Attakapas, called Tuckapaw by the inhabitants.[83] This was the home of the Acadian, provincial of provincials, illiterate, speaking nothing but his own patois, cultivating a few acres of corn, sweet potatoes, and cotton, and grazing his herds of cattle and ponies. "Here, unchanged," Richard Taylor wrote, "was the French peasant of Fenelon and Bossuet, of Louis le Grand and his successor le Bien-Aime. Tender and true were his traditions of la belle France, but of France before Voltaire and the encyclopaedists, the Convention and the Jacobins—ere she had lost faith in all things, divine and human, save the *bourgeoisie* and *avocats*." [84]

With their appreciation of pastoral charms somewhat dulled by rain and heavy roads, the soldiers of the 13th and 19th Corps slogged into Alexandria on March 25, seven days late.[85] As General Banks had arrived himself by boat the day before, the assembling of the Federal host was now substantially complete. It was an impressive display of military might—the greatest in the history of the Southwest. The detachment from Sherman's Army of the Tennessee, consisting of two divisions of the 16th Corps, one of the 17th Corps, and Brigadier Gen-

[82] Edwin B. Lufkin, *History of the Thirteenth Maine Regiment* (Bridgton, Me., 1898), p. 76.

[83] Olmsted, *Journey Through Texas,* p. 395.

[84] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 106. This description of the Teche and Attakapas country closely follows that given by Taylor (*ibid.,* pp. 104–106), but see also Orton S. Clark, *The One Hundred and Sixteenth Regiment of New York State Volunteers* (Buffalo, 1868), pp. 145–47.

[85] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part I, 426–27.

eral A. W. Ellet's Marine Brigade, all under the immediate command of A. J. Smith, totaled about 11,000 effectives.[86] From Banks's Department of the Gulf there were two divisions of the 13th Corps, two of the 19th Corps, and Lee's cavalry division, amounting to 14,250 infantry and artillery and 3900 cavalry.[87] Engineer and escort troops brought the grand total to 30,000 effectives of all arms, with 90 guns.[88] In addition to this imposing aggregation of land forces, Admiral Porter had brought up the Red thirteen ironclads, four tinclads, and five other armed vessels. Together with the army's transports and quartermaster boats, there were some 60 Federal vessels on the river, mounting the staggering total of 210 guns.[89]

As Banks surveyed this vast array amid the bustle and noise of the town, victory must have seemed assured. "One bound to Alexandria, one bound to Shreveport, one bound to the Gulf." [90] That was his program.

[86] *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 203; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 350–51.

[87] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 167. Effective strength is computed as 93% of the present for duty strength for infantry, and 85% for cavalry.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 168. Several regiments of the Second Division, 19th Corps, came up by water and did not arrive until a few days after the land column reached Alexandria, but to avoid confusion they are here included in the grand total. The Corps d'Afrique, which also arrived a few days later, is not included. From first to last Banks had about 2500 colored troops with him. They saw almost no action.

[89] Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 366. This figure includes 12-pounder boat howitzers.

[90] *Com. Con. War,* p. 400.

CHAPTER IV

*

Banks Finds the Enemy

*

WHEN BANKS FIRST ARRIVED at Alexandria he received a severe shock. Look where he would, he saw sailors and marines hauling cotton from the surrounding countryside and putting it on their boats and barges: Porter's men were seizing it as prize of war.[1] Federal legislation with respect to wartime trade had specifically left intact naval prize law, and, as Lieutenant Commander Thomas O. Selfridge put it, the "incentive of prize money naturally influenced the navy to be especially active [in seizing cotton]." [2] Certainly the navy was active during its voyage up the Red.

> The officers of the navy [General Banks complained], during the time we were there [Alexandria], were representing from day to day to the officers of the army the amount of prize money they were to receive, which excited a great deal of bad feeling on the part of the army. All the general officers urged me very earnestly to arrest these men, make war upon them upon the ground that they were engaged in a business which did not belong to the navy at all.

"It was rather demoralizing to the soldiers," recalled Major

[1] Howe to Chase, April 1, 1864, Chase Papers; *Com. Con War,* pp. 18, 71, 74, 224–25.

[2] Thomas O. Selfridge, *Memoirs of Thomas O. Selfridge* (New York and London, 1924), p. 96. Under prize law, 50% of the value of captured property went to naval personnel; of this 50% Porter got 5%. The remaining 50% was paid into a fund for disabled seamen. Futrell, "Federal Trade with the Confederacy," p. 122.

David C. Houston, "to see the navy seizing the cotton for prize on land, while they did not get any." [3]

Porter's men threw themselves into their work with great gusto. Wagons and teams were commandeered, mules were "branded" with painted letters two feet high identifying them as the property of "U. S. N.," and expeditions were sent seven or eight miles into the country in search of booty. Raw cotton was brought to nearby gins, where gangs of sailors and marines ginned and baled it.[4] "Jack made very good cotton bales," Porter was heard to say approvingly.[5] "The navy is seizing all the cotton they can get hold of," wrote Captain Deming N. Welch, assistant quartermaster at Alexandria, to Colonel Holabird. "Every gun-boat is loaded with cotton, and the officers are taking it without regard to the loyalty of the owners. It looks to me like a big steal." [6]

The sailors' ingenuity was unlimited when spurred by the thought of prize money. Selfridge explained that the "legal difficulties of establishing the non-Union ownership of captured cotton led my crew to resort to an expedient which, while not entirely ethical, may have been justified by the special conditions. They made stencils of the letters 'C. S. A.' (Confederate States of America) and would so mark captured cotton. While I did not authorize this procedure, I knew of and winked at it." [7] The crew of Porter's flagship *Black Hawk* broke open Rachal's warehouse at Alexandria, took the cotton out, and marked it in this manner while the admiral looked on in approval.[8] Yet later in the year Porter became very indignant when the United States District Court at Springfield,

[3] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 18, 74.
[4] *Ibid.,* pp. 18, 82, 90, 224, 283, 288.
[5] *Ibid.,* p. 303.
[6] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part ii, 655.
[7] Selfridge, *Memoirs,* pp. 96–97; Harrington, *Banks,* p. 162.
[8] *Official Report Relative to the Conduct of Federal Troops in Western Louisiana, during the Invasions of 1863 and 1864* (Shreveport, 1865), p. 84.

Illinois, admitted private claimants to cotton that was, to use the admiral's own words, "actually marked C. S. A." [9] The sailors, said Colonel James G. Wilson, "would go into the country five or six miles, find a lot of cotton and brand it 'C. S. A.,' and underneath that 'U. S. N.' I recollect that I asked the admiral one day, when he did me the honor of asking me to dine with him, if he knew what those letters stood for. He said, 'No.' I said they stood for 'Cotton Stealing Association of the United States Navy.' " [10] One can almost hear Porter's affable guffaw. He could afford to take a joke.

Banks of course was not prepared for all this. Probably he had received some assurance from the McKees that the cotton would be spared, and now it appeared that the navy had spoiled everything.[11] Seeing his hopes for a grand haul going up in smoke—for the Confederates were burning thousands of bales to prevent their capture—the general remonstrated with Porter, pointing out the loss the national treasury would sustain as a result of such indiscriminate confiscation. The admiral paid no heed, for although he always asserted his supremacy on the water, even to the least of puddles, he did not hesitate to invade the army's jurisdiction in his quest for cotton.[12] Confronted with such a man, Banks could do nothing.

When it became apparent that Porter would continue to seize and the Confederates to burn, action had to be taken to save something from the wreck. Consequently, on April 2 Banks wrote Captain Welch that the "people of the country are alarmed lest their cotton be destroyed by rebels. It may be

[9] *O. R. N.*, XXVI, 412.

[10] *Com. Con. War*, p. 11.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 224–25, 284; *House Rep. Com.*, 38th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 24, p. 84. Almost certainly it would have been burnt anyway. The only cotton Kirby Smith exempted from burning consisted of specific lots that had been bought from the Confederate government, and small quantities (5 to 20 bales) owned by loyal Confederate families.

[12] Cf. Futrell, "Federal Trade with the Confederacy," pp. 121–22.

well to allow them to bring it in on their own terms, turning it over to your department when here for shipment to New Orleans. . . ." [13] On the same day he addressed a letter to Chief Quartermaster Holabird, telling him that

> Admiral Porter has seized the cotton of this country from 6 to 10 miles from the river. This has caused a general burning above Alexandria of property which had been spared to this place. As a consequence, no attempt has been made to prevent its destruction, but orders have been given to the quartermaster department here to take possession of all products, give full vouchers therefor, to transport it to New Orleans, and turn over the proceeds to the Treasury Department, taking receipts therefor, leaving it to be disposed of for the benefit of claimants or the government, as justice may require. No party or person has any privileges or promises other than in this manner.[14]

The great cotton bonfire was also undoubtedly a disagreeable surprise to Frank Howe, who, in company with several other men interested in cotton, had come up to Alexandria on Banks's headquarters boat.[15] These gentlemen, however, together with an indefinite number of speculators who had managed to get up the river by hook or crook, were confronted with still other unpleasant news. In spite of great pressure brought to bear upon him, Banks steadily refused to give out permits to buy cotton. "The cotton buyers," Welch wrote Holabird from Alexandria, "are after me with a sharp stick; they go to General Banks and he tells them to come to me, and I send them back to get the order in writing, and of course they do not get it." [16] "The cotton men harrass [?] the soul out of me," Banks wrote his wife plaintively,[17] but never-

[13] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part iii, 18.
[14] *Ibid.,* pp. 18–19.
[15] *Com. Con. War,* p. 178; Smith-Brady Report, p. 257. Howe, William Dwight, George B. Waldron, and probably others. Howe stated that he had accompanied the expedition at Flanders' request.
[16] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part iii, 4.
[17] Banks to his wife, April 2, 1864, Banks Papers.

theless he remained firm. James Madison Wells, Louisiana Unionist and recently elected lieutenant governor of the Federal-held portion of the state, owned 3200 bales of cotton on his Rapides Parish plantation, and he asked Banks to allow him to ship it to his own factors in New Orleans. But the general refused. The only permit Wells could secure was one allowing him to ship his cotton to the army quartermaster in New Orleans, although care was taken to expedite the shipment.[18] Wells sent down about 1000 bales, but he was swindled out of a large part of the proceeds by Jacob Mahler, a corrupt quartermaster officer, and C. A. Weed, Andrew Butler's former partner.[19]

In short, so far as can be determined, Banks gave no one who accompanied the expedition any special trading privileges, "to the great dissatisfaction," as the general put it, "of the very patriotic men who were there." [20] If Frank Howe and Daniel Dwight had any idea of putting their plans into operation, they too were disappointed.[21] "Col: Howe distressed me very much," Banks told his wife soon after he left Alexandria, "and his absence is a relief." [22] Of course, when Samuel L. Casey and William Butler appeared with a pass bearing Lincoln's signature, Banks was obliged to give them a free hand.[23]

Other vexations besides cotton matters confronted Banks. On March 26 there arrived a letter of instructions from Grant, who had now been general-in-chief for two weeks. In this communication he told Banks that he regarded "the success of your present move as of great importance in reducing the number of troops necessary for protecting the navigation of the

[18] Smith-Brady Report, pp. 129–37; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part iii, 269.

[19] Smith-Brady Report, pp. 129–37, 306–307.

[20] *Com. Con. War,* p. 23. Probably a reference to Frank Howe and his associates.

[21] Cf. Howe to Banks, April 5, 1864, Banks Papers; *Com. Con. War,* pp. 224–27.

[22] Banks to his wife, April 4, 1864, Banks Papers. Howe was back in New Orleans a few days later and soon left Louisiana. Howe to Banks, April 8, 1864, Banks Papers.

[23] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 81–82, 85.

Mississippi River. It is also important that Shreveport should be taken as soon as possible." But if it appeared that Shreveport could not be taken by the end of April, then Banks must return A. J. Smith's command to Sherman by the middle of that month, "even if it leads to the abandonment of the main object of your expedition." If the campaign was a success, Banks was to garrison Shreveport and the line of the Red River and then return to New Orleans with the balance of his force ready to participate in a movement against Mobile.[24]

Any idea Banks may have had of retaining A. J. Smith's divisions indefinitely was scotched by these instructions. Moreover, he now had to succeed before a fixed deadline or else abandon the whole campaign. His reputation—his political reputation—could scarcely survive such a fiasco as that. The pressure was on.

The general had still other worries. The annual rise of the Red River, usually beginning in December or January, had thus far failed to materialize, the first such failure since 1855. This year the rise, what there was of it, did not begin till the end of February or early in March. Consequently, when Porter's vessels reached Alexandria on March 15 and 16 it was found that the water on the falls at that place was then too shallow to float the ironclads, although there was enough water to allow the lighter tinclads to pass above the town.[25] Therefore it seemed at first that Banks was faced with the choice of either proceeding westward without the co-operation of the backbone of Porter's fleet, or else of abandoning the expedition entirely. Rather than acquiesce in this dilemma, the general urged upon Porter the necessity for the navy's presence upstream, and insisted that he use every effort to get his vessels over the shallows.[26] Although Porter had boasted to the point

[24] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part ii, 610–11; see also p. 494.
[25] *Com. Con. War*, pp. 281–83.
[26] *O. R. N.*, xxvi, 50.

of positive tedium that he could take his fleet "wherever the sand was damp," [27] he was nevertheless very reluctant to risk his boats on the upper Red at the present stage of water.[28] The admiral told Banks that if they did go up, it would take a miracle to get them down again. Still Banks persisted, and, feeling that the War Department was depending on his cooperation to make the expedition a success, and also doubtless bearing in mind the many bales of cotton farther up the river, Porter agreed to go, even if, as he said, "I should lose all my boats." [29]

If Porter threw himself as wholeheartedly into the task of passing the falls as he later claimed, he chose a curious method of procedure. Entirely against the advice of his experienced Red River pilot, a gentleman with the improbable name of Wellington W. Withenbury, the admiral decided to make his heaviest ironclad, the *Eastport,* the first vessel to attempt the passage. "I remarked to Admiral Porter then," Withenbury later recalled, "that if my judgment was asked for, I should say that it was bad policy to put the largest boat into the chute first, as she might get aground, and if she did it would hinder the passage of the other vessels. But he said, 'I want you to go on board and take her over the falls.' " [30] Notwithstanding the fact that he had several ironclads of a new class that could now have passed the rapids without great difficulty, Porter stuck to his decision. And as Withenbury predicted, the *Eastport* stuck on the rocks. After two and a half or three days' work, during which the river began to fall and then rose slightly, the *Eastport* was got above the shallows.[31] Besides

[27] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 8–9.

[28] *Ibid.,* p. 275; *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 50.

[29] *Com. Con. War,* p. 275. According to Banks, Porter was noncommittal as to whether or not the fleet should attempt to go up, although he professed to be confident of a rise in the river. Porter's statements should always be scrutinized carefully, but in this case his version of the incident has been substantially adopted.

[30] *Ibid.,* p. 282.

[31] *Ibid.,* pp. 282–83.

this vessel, twelve other gunboats and thirty transports steamed into the upper Red and made ready to accompany the land forces westward.[32]

Among the boats that could not pass the rapids were those belonging to Ellet's Marine Brigade, one of them, the hospital boat *Woodford,* being sunk in the attempt.[33] Furthermore, many men of this brigade, which was a quasi-naval organization under army jurisdiction, were sick with smallpox, and others were rumored to be in a mutinous disposition. They were entirely dependent on their boats for transportation, and so obviously they could not go with the army.[34] Therefore it was not an unmixed disappointment to Banks when the tug *Alf Cutting* arrived at Alexandria carrying an order from Major General James McPherson, commanding at Vicksburg, directing the brigade to return to that place to assist in defending navigation on the Mississippi.[35] In obedience to this call, Ellet and his men left Alexandria on March 27, stopping at every landing on the river to pillage, plunder, and destroy.[36] It might seem that Banks was well rid of this outfit, but nevertheless its departure reduced the force at his command by about 3000 men.[37] The loss of these troops was partially offset by the simultaneous arrival of a brigade of colored troops, numbering 1535 present for duty.[38]

While Porter's sailors were sweating and grunting and heaving to get the *Eastport* over the rocks, Banks the soldier

[32] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 50. The gunboats were: (tinclads) *Cricket, Fort Hindman;* (wooden) *Lexington;* (ironclads) *Eastport, Mound City, Chillicothe, Carondelet, Pittsburg, Ozark, Neosho, Louisville, Osage.*

[33] *Ibid.,* p. 39; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 203.

[34] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 7, 322.

[35] *Ibid.; O. R.,* XXXIV, Part ii, 735. Warren D. Crandall and Isaac D. Newell, *History of the Ram Fleet and the Mississippi Marine Brigade* (St. Louis, 1907), p. 378.

[36] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part ii, 746, 768.

[37] *Com. Con. War,* p. 322; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 350–51.

[38] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 167; Part ii, 769. Date is conjectural (within two days).

sloughed off his thin veneer of militarism, and with the adroitness of a Doctor Jekyll changed into Banks the politician. The election and inauguration of a Louisiana state administration left the work of reconstruction only half completed. There still remained the business of holding a convention to draw up a constitution to supersede the anti-bellum charter that was theoretically still the law of the land in Louisiana. Banks therefore decided to hold an election for delegates to the forthcoming convention; representatives from north-central Louisiana would create at least a superficial impression of widespread support for the new-fledged government.

Alexandria had had a bitter taste of Federal occupation in the spring of 1863. Half ruined by the passage of war, stores closed, streets empty of civilians, private houses closed as if, as one observant bluecoat remarked, "to exclude even the breath of the hated Yankee," [39] the town was scarcely a propitious place to invite endorsement of the Lincoln regime. The conduct of A. J. Smith's men, who looted stores and private homes and grossly insulted women,[40] did nothing to make the inhabitants desire the return of the old flag. At all events, "by request of citizens of the parish of Rapides," as politician Banks expressed it, an election was held on April 1.[41] Flags fluttered and guns boomed as the Unionist citizens of the parish trooped to the polls to exercise their right of franchise, and when the ballots were tabulated it was found that a grand total of 300 votes had been cast.[42] In addition, several hundred other fair-weather patriots, some of whom were doubtless motivated by hopes of being able to dispose of their cotton, took the oath of allegiance, having been assured that the Federal occupation of the country was permanent in nature. There

[39] Clark, *116th New York*, p. 148.

[40] G. P. Whittington, "Rapides Parish, Louisiana—a History" [10th installment], *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XVIII (1935), 32–38.

[41] *Com. Con. War*, p. 335.

[42] *Ibid.*, pp. 281, 335.

were also some enlistments in the Union army by genuine pro-Union refugees and jayhawkers.[43] A year later the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, filled with men anxious to discredit Lincoln's system of reconstruction, inquired of Admiral Porter as to the character of the elections held by Banks. With his usual pithiness, the admiral called them a farce and a humbug. No, he did not know who was being elected, he told the committee with lofty contempt. "We are sailors, not politicians. We hardly know what a sheriff is, unless he comes after us." [44] But Wade, Chandler, and Julian knew a valuable witness when they saw one.[45]

While these events were transpiring at Alexandria, the army was set in motion toward Grand Ecore and Natchitoches. The advance, composed of Lee's cavalry, passed Henderson's Hill on the afternoon of March 26. A. J. Smith's command left Alexandria on the 27th and 28th and marched to Cotile Landing, where it was embarked on steamers and sent upstream.[46] Since low water in the Red necessitated the transshipment of supplies around the falls, Grover's division was left at Alexandria as both a guard and a working force,[47] thus reducing Banks's available fighting force by 3600 effectives.[48] On the 28th the other division of the 19th Corps and the two from the 13th Corps began the overland march to Grand Ecore.[49] On the evening of April 2 Banks himself boarded his headquarters boat for the upstream trip, having written General

[43] *Ibid.;* Newsome, *Experience in the War,* p. 120; Lawrence Van Alstyne, *Diary of an Enlisted Man* (New Haven, 1910), p. 294.

[44] *Com. Con. War,* p. 280.

[45] Cf. *ibid.,* pp. ix–x, xv.

[46] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 135; Ewer, *3d Massachusetts,* p. 139; Richard B. Irwin, *History of the Nineteenth Army Corps* (New York and London, 1892), p. 294.

[47] John Homans, "The Red River Expedition," in *The Mississippi Valley, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, 1861–1864* (*Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts*) (Boston, 1910), VIII, 73.

[48] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 167.

[49] *Ibid.,* pp. 426–27.

Halleck in a most optimistic vein of the prospects that lay before him and his army. Not only did he not fear the concentration of the enemy at Shreveport, Banks told his superior, but he was worried lest the Confederates should be unwilling to give battle at that place. If they did not—and he expected to be in Shreveport by April 10—he intended to "pursue the enemy into the interior of Texas, for the sole purpose of dispersing or destroying his forces," if possible, bearing in mind that part of his troops would have to return east of the Mississippi to participate in the major spring campaigns.[50] Banks's optimism failed to reassure Lincoln, however, who commented, "I am sorry to see this tone of confidence; the next news we shall hear from there will be of a defeat." [51] Sad experience had taught the President to take nothing for granted.

Marching alternately through heat and rain, dust and mud, General Franklin's column tramped northwest through the narrow belt of alluvium that flanked the ochery waters of the Red.[52] A large number of the rich plantations along the way displayed burnt offerings in the form of smoldering cotton gins fired by the retreating Southerners.[53] In many places a few sick and aged Negroes were the only inhabitants to be seen.[54] Generally the countryside became more rolling, and for the first time in Louisiana Banks's men saw stones along the roadside.[55] The march was not without its diversions, and the men of the 56th Ohio had a lively time fishing as they waited for the bridge over Cane River to be rebuilt. Foraging a large fishnet from somewhere, they managed to catch a formidable five-foot gar. The fish was quickly killed, cleaned, and cooked,

50 *Ibid.*, pp. 179–80.

51 Nicolay and Hay, *Lincoln,* VIII, 291.

52 Clark, *116th New York,* pp. 149–51; Elias P. Pellet, *History of the 114th Regiment, New York State Volunteers* (Norwich, N. Y., 1866), pp. 190–91.

53 Clark, *116th New York,* p. 150.

54 Henry A. Shorey, *The Story of the Maine Fifteenth* (Bridgton, Me., 1890), p. 77.

55 Clark, *116th New York,* p. 150; Pellet, *114th New York,* p. 187.

and the soldiers found its meat to be "sweet and nice," [56] although novelty and hard marching probably added considerable flavor to a fish usually classed as vermin. Over on the river A. J. Smith's men were receiving a joyful welcome from the slaves of the riverside plantations, who turned out in force as the Federal transports steamed westward. "One group of color'd girls," an Illinois soldier recorded in his diary, "welcomed us with waving of handkerchiefs, bonnets and aprons and a song and a hurra for Lincoln too. . . . The leading measure was Welcome brothers, and good bye brothers. . . ." [57] It was a great day, "when de Linkum gunboats come."

The head of Franklin's column reached Natchitoches on April 1, only a day behind the cavalry, having covered the eighty miles from Alexandria in four days.[58] The Federals found Natchitoches to be a prosperous and handsome town with many expensive buildings, some of them of Spanish architecture. Most of the citizens, even those whose cotton had been burnt by the Confederates, were bitterly and outspokenly hostile toward the invaders, although the female population could not forbear looking through the windows at the passing troops.[59] Four miles beyond Natchitoches lay Grand Ecore, an inconsiderable village composed of a handful of dwellings. Here on the evening of April 3 Banks arrived on board his headquarters boat, the *Black Hawk,* having been delayed somewhat on the way up by the necessity of assisting the *Eastport,* which had once more gone aground.[60]

[56] Thomas J. Williams, *An Historical Sketch of the 56th Ohio Volunteer Infantry* (Columbus, O., 1899[?]), p. 66.

[57] Stewart Diary, p. 17 (April 2).

[58] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 428, 445; Bringhurst and Swigart, *46th Indiana,* p. 86.

[59] Newsome, *Experience in the War,* p. 123; Clark, *116th New York,* p. 151; William Simpson to Mrs. Banks, April 6, 1864, Banks Papers. However, Harris H. Beecher, *Record of the 114th Regiment, N. Y. S. V.* (Norwich, N. Y., 1866), p. 306, stated that relations between the townspeople and the Federals were friendly.

[60] Simpson to Mrs. Banks, April 6, 1864, Banks Papers; *Com. Con. War,* pp. 282, 286.

At Grand Ecore a decision confronted Banks. Up to that point the route of the army had lain near the river, in easy communication with transports and supply boats, and in comforting proximity to the guns of Porter's fleet. But at Grand Ecore the road to Shreveport struck off to the west and away from the river, and unless there was another road close to the Red that the army could follow, it would thenceforth be dependent on its own firepower and supply trains. Was there a river road? The Federals did not know. On April 3 Banks's chief of staff, Brigadier General Charles P. Stone, came on board the *Black Hawk* at Grand Ecore and, opening out a map, asked Pilot Withenbury to point out the location of Pleasant Hill. He did so, making comments on the local road system in general. Later in the same day both Banks and Stone came to Withenbury and asked him "how it would do to cross the river at that point and go up on the other side. I said," Withenbury later recalled, "that it would take them about three days longer to reach Shreveport, but they would have better roads perhaps. There was an old military road that led from Camte [Campti] to Fort Towson, but they would be obliged to go around some lakes if they went that way." He also remarked that by taking the inland road to Pleasant Hill and Mansfield the army would be out of touch with the river until Shreveport was reached. "I pointed out on the map precisely all the roads," said Withenbury, who had given Stone some of his own maps.[61]

Exactly what roads were described by the pilot or delineated on these maps, it is impossible to say with certainty. Only two roads were mentioned specifically by him, the inland road to Pleasant Hill and the Campti-Fort Towson road on the east side of the Red. There was, however, another road, one which closely followed the right (west) bank of the river. To anticipate a little, Admiral Porter, who shortly was to steam up the

[61] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 286–87. The "Fort Towson" road probably was the road to Minden.

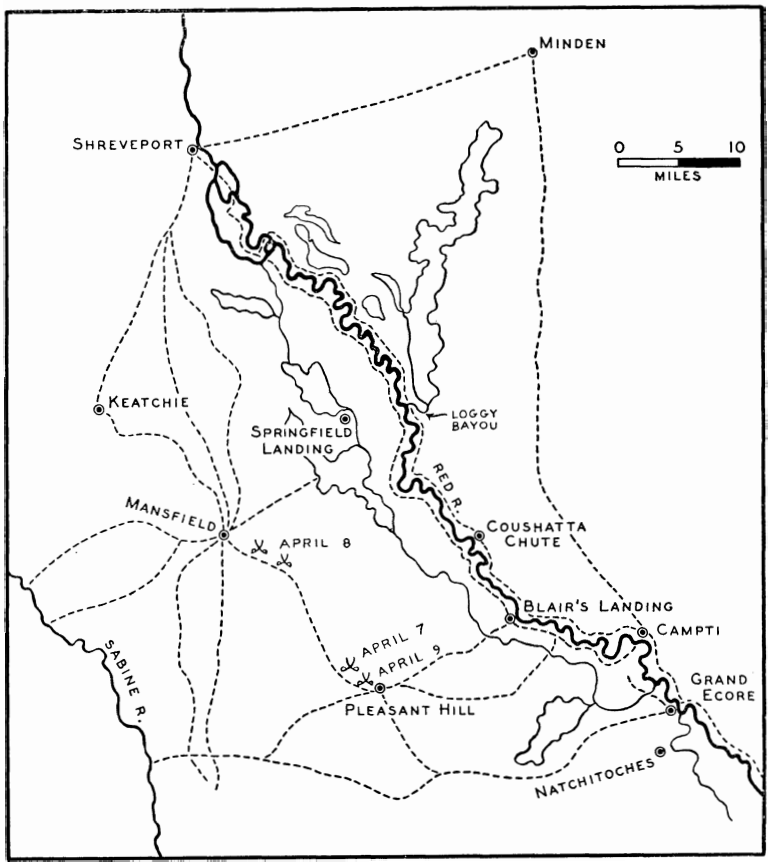


FIGURE 4. Natchitoches to Shreveport

river as far as Loggy Bayou, himself saw this road, with corn and cattle in abundance along the way. "It struck me very forcibly," the admiral later wrote Sherman, "that this would have been the route for the army, where they could have traveled without all that immense train, the country supporting them as they proceeded along. The roads are good, wide fields on all sides, a river protecting the right flank of the army, and gunboats in company." [62] What was so apparent to Porter was obviously known to Withenbury, and it seems equally evident that if such a route had been described to Banks, he would have chosen it in preference to the inland road. The supposition that Banks lacked this vital information is strengthened by the fact that General Franklin, aware of the advantages of marching as close to the river as possible, tried to persuade Banks to order a reconnaissance to find out whether or not there was a practicable road. Banks refused, giving as his reason that a reconnaissance would require time that could not be spared.[63] Thus the available evidence indicates that Withenbury, for reasons of his own,[64] did not point out to Banks and Stone the road that followed the west bank of the Red. This apparently minor incident actually marked the turning point of the campaign. While all such matters are speculative, it seems safe to say that if the Federals had taken the river road, their chances of capturing Shreveport would have been enormously increased. But in his ignorance Banks took the inland route. It

[62] *O. R. N.*, xxvi, 60.

[63] *Com. Con. War,* p. 35; Wickham Hoffman, *Camp, Court and Siege* (New York, 1877), p. 87.

[64] Evidently Withenbury was just another time-server. He described himself as a Unionist who stayed behind Confederate lines in 1863–64 to pass information to Banks. (*Com. Con. War,* p. 285.) It is known that he sold cotton stored at Shreveport to the Confederate government on July 14, 1863, for which he received $4413.73. (*Senate Documents,* 62d Cong., 3d Sess., No. 987, p. 256.) Possibly he owned cotton on the river and feared it would be seized should the Federals take the river road. He later appeared as claimant for some of the cotton seized by the navy during the campaign.

proved to be a fateful parting of the ways for the general and his men.

At the time, the apparent necessity of leaving the river at Grand Ecore did not particularly disturb Banks. The day after his conference with Stone and Withenbury the general wrote his wife that "the enemy retreats before us and will not fight a battle this side of Shreveport if then."[65] If the Confederates would not fight, the line of advance was relatively immaterial. On the same day that he penned these optimistic lines Banks reviewed his troops at Natchitoches,[66] a kind of display of which he seems to have been fond. His attention was also given to organizing and replenishing the supply trains upon which the army would have to depend on its overland march. This was a matter of considerable magnitude, for the trains of Lee's cavalry and the 13th and 19th Corps contained the astounding total of over 1000 wagons, one wagon for every sixteen men present for duty.[67]

According to Admiral Porter, at Grand Ecore Banks held another election similar to that staged at Alexandria. The people, Porter said, were "very much frightened and did not want to vote. But they were impressed with the notion that if they would come forward and prove their loyalty by voting they would be allowed to take their cotton out and do what they pleased with it." [68]

During the army's stay at Natchitoches contact with the enemy was confined to unimportant skirmishing. On April 2 a part of Lee's division struck the flank of Colonel X. B. Deb-

[65] Banks to his wife, April 4, 1864, Banks Papers.

[66] Williams, *56th Ohio,* p. 66.

[67] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 32, 58, 323. A. J. Smith's command, which had a small amount of transportation, is not included in these figures. In comparison, at the opening of the Wilderness campaign about a month later, the huge Army of the Potomac had only 4000 wagons. (Johnson and Buel, *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 145.)

[68] *Com. Con. War,* p. 281.

ray's raw regiment of cavalry near Crump's Hill as it was en route from Texas to Pleasant Hill. Debray's men rallied quickly and repulsed the Federals.[69] Two days later a brigade of cavalry and some of A. J. Smith's men went up the river several miles to Campti to protect a stranded gunboat from small parties of Confederates on the left bank of the Red.[70] On the 5th the Southerners got the best of a brisk skirmish near Natchitoches.[71]

On April 6 the army began to leave Grand Ecore. The cavalry was in the lead, immediately followed by its train of more than 300 wagons. Next came Franklin's infantry, two divisions of the 13th and one of the 19th Corps, and then a train of 700 wagons. A. J. Smith's men, two divisions of the 16th Corps, formed the rear of the column and did not leave Grand Ecore until April 7.[72] Colonel William H. Dickey's brigade of the Corps d'Afrique was assigned to guard the main wagon train, while Colonel Oliver P. Gooding's brigade of cavalry covered the rear and left flank of the column.[73]

Admiral Porter left for Shreveport on the 7th. Since the river was still rising very slowly, and the navy was scraping and bouncing along the bottom, the admiral took only six gunboats with which to convoy a fleet of twenty transports carrying not only supplies for the army but also T. Kilby Smith's division of the 17th Corps, which went along as a guard for the unarmed vessels.[74] According to an agreement with Banks, Porter was to proceed upstream until he came abreast of Springfield Landing, which lay inland to the west of the river. When the navy

[69] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 158; Comte de Paris [Louis Philippe Albert d'Orleans], *History of the Civil War in America* (Philadelphia, 1875–88), IV, 515; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 520.

[70] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 135.

[71] Van Alstyne, *Diary,* pp. 299–301.

[72] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 284, 322, 324, 331, 428, 445; *Com. Con War,* pp. 32, 58.

[73] Irwin, *19th Corps,* p. 296.

[74] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 201, 323; *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 51; Newsome, *Experience in the War,* p. 124.

reached that point on April 10, it was expected that contact would be made with the land column moving north from Mansfield.[75]

As Banks's men turned their faces to the west and tramped away from the river, the nature of the country changed markedly from that which had become familiar to them on the journey through the rich plantation country south of Alexandria and in the flood plain of the Red. Now they began to traverse what one Yankee cavalryman called a "howling wilderness." [76] The narrow road, parts of it merely a sunken woods path resembling a deep, broad ditch, wound over hills of red clay and sand. Pine thickets pressed in from either side of the road like the walls of a corridor. The few buildings passed on the way were crude affairs of clay-daubed pine poles. Water was almost nonexistent, except that which fell from the sky on the 7th and turned the road into a rusty mud.[77]

Probably because of the mud, Franklin's column was strung out for more than twenty miles. A. J. Smith's "gorillas," as the men from Sherman's army were sometimes called, were greatly irritated by the slowness of the huge train in front of them. "Cump's" veterans traveled light, and they were contemptuous of the Gulf Department's many wagons, which they professed to believe were loaded with iron bedsteads and paper collars for Banks's men. In fact, relations between the soldiers of the two commands were generally rather strained. Many of Banks's men were natives of New York and New England, and except for the two major assaults on Port Hudson they had seen little hot fighting. On the other hand, Smith's men were

[75] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 201, 276, 323.

[76] Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry,* p. 142.

[77] Scott, *32d Iowa,* pp. 135–36; Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* p. 188; [Anon.] *An Historical Sketch of the 162d Regiment N. Y. Vol. Infantry* (Albany, 1867), p. 25; William F. Tiemann, *The 159th Regiment Infantry, New-York State Volunteers* (Brooklyn, 1891), p. 67; Bryner, *47th Illinois,* p. 101; Pellet, *114th New York,* p. 193; J. Cutler Andrews, *The North Reports the Civil War* (Pittsburgh, 1955), p. 506.

nearly all from the Northwest; they were rough and ready campaigners who had heard the Miniés fly thick and fast more than a few times. They considered Banks's men effete; the latter regarded the Westerners as uncouth, and there was no love lost between the gorillas and the paper-collar dudes from the East.[78]

As the Federal column plunged into the brooding pine wasteland, the gathering of the Confederate clans was approaching a climax. From Texas were riding regiments of wild horsemen of the plains, led by Debray, Terrell, Likens, Woods, Bagby, Major, Hardeman—men with whom Banks would soon have to reckon.[79] To lend a Continental flavor to the cavalry roster, there was a regiment of German troopers commanded by Colonel August Buchel, weakening by so much the impression common in the North that German settlers in Texas were loyal Unionists.[80] Commanding all the cavalry was Major General Tom Green, a gunner boy at San Jacinto, a hard-driving combat officer, intrepid in action, and beloved by his men.[81]

While Green's men were finding their way across the Sabine into Louisiana, Kirby Smith ordered southward most of the infantry belonging to the command of Major General Sterling Price, who faced the enemy in Arkansas. Although from the first he anticipated an advance on Shreveport from Little Rock, in the beginning Smith felt that Banks's invasion must be met and turned back before he could afford to advance against the Federal troops under Steele. Consequently the small divisions of Brigadier Generals Mosby Parsons and Thomas J. Churchill were ordered from Arkansas to Shreveport. Brigadier General Samuel B. Maxey, commanding Confederate forces in the Indian Territory, was directed to detach part of his forces and

[78] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 136; Hoffman, *Camp, Court and Siege,* p. 93; Harrington, *Banks,* pp. 152–53.

[79] Francis R. Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas* (Austin, 1900), pp. 534–35; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 369; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part ii, 1029.

[80] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 158.

[81] *Ibid.,* p. 178; Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas,* p. 536.

send it to Arkansas to assist Price in resisting Steele.[82] Once these dispositions had been made, the resources of the Trans-Mississippi Department were substantially exhausted. No more reinforcements of any consequence were to be had.[83]

When Banks's army set out from Grand Ecore on April 6, the concentration of Confederate units was not yet complete. Taylor's infantry, Mouton's and Walker's divisions, had reached Pleasant Hill on April 1, moving on to Mansfield on the 4th and 5th. By the 6th the bulk of Green's cavalry was with Taylor, and the troops from Price's army were at Keatchie, between Mansfield and Shreveport.[84] At Mansfield, where he had established his headquarters on the evening of April 3, Taylor put an end to his 200-mile retreat from the banks of the Atchafalaya. He was in no happy frame of mind. His long withdrawal before the army of the much-despised Banks had been so much gall and wormwood, but nothing could be done until reinforcements came up. Green's cavalry, some without weapons, was exasperatingly slow in arriving, and Price's infantry was detained in Shreveport ostensibly to await a supply of ammunition. Taylor was thrown into bitter despair by his inability to strike a blow. "Had I conceived for a instant," he had written Kirby Smith on March 31,

> that such astonishing delay would ensue before re-enforcements reached me I would have fought a battle even against the heavy odds. It would have been better to lose the State after a defeat than to surrender it without a fight. The fairest and richest portion of the Confederacy is now a waste. Louisiana may well know her destiny. Her children are exiles; her labor system is destroyed. Expecting every hour to receive the promised re-enforcements, I did not feel justified

[82] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 479; Part ii, 1056, 1062–63; Part iii, 745, 761.

[83] Magruder was left with only 4600 men to defend his huge district (Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona—mainly eastern and southern Texas). *Ibid.*, Part iii, p. 800.

[84] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, pp. 157–59.

in hazarding a general engagement with my little army. I shall never cease to regret my error.[85]

Taylor undoubtedly laid the blame for these delays and disappointments on Kirby Smith, whom he continued to regard as a pompous potentate presiding arbitrarily over an empty empire. While it does appear that the divisions from Price were delayed in Shreveport for an unnecessarily long time, the slowness of Green's movement cannot be laid at Smith's door.[86] But there were still other incidents that served to put a strain on Taylor's tenuous relations with his chief. Surgeon Sol Smith, a loyal member of Kirby Smith's staff, had made it his business to complain more or less publicly that Taylor was to blame for the Federal invasion and that he had refused reinforcements proffered by General Smith. A civilian visitor to departmental headquarters at Shreveport wrote Taylor a letter that gave him the impression that troops were being deliberately withheld from him. These reports evoked some rather brisk correspondence between the two generals that did little to promote that confidence between command levels so necessary in war.[87]

To complicate matters still further, Kirby Smith had changed his mind as to the basic strategy to be employed in meeting the Federal offensive. Since he obviously could not concentrate against Steele and Banks simultaneously, it was necessary to choose which of the two he would attack first. As of March 20 it had been his intention to attempt to defeat Banks's column

[85] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 515.

[86] As early as Feb. 21 Smith had ordered Magruder to have Green's cavalry ready to move at a moment's notice, and the order for Green to begin the march was telegraphed on Mar. 12, the day A. J. Smith landed his divisions at Simmesport. As for Price's infantry, Smith stated that its delay at Shreveport was due to a shortage of ammunition that could not be remedied until Mar. 30. Even if this was unavoidable, the subsequent delay in forwarding these troops to Taylor was excessive. (See *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 479, 517; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 159.)

[87] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 512–13, 517, 519.

and then confront Steele with the combined forces of Price and Taylor.[88] After Steele had set out from Little Rock on March 23, however, it became apparent that his was much the smaller of the two Northern columns. Smith then became uncertain, being torn between the two alternatives, but by April 3 he had tentatively concluded that he should concentrate against Steele's smaller army before trying conclusions with Banks, notwithstanding the fact that Banks was much nearer to Shreveport.[89] In expressing his own views by letter, Smith asked Taylor for his opinion. In answer Taylor said that he had for some time expected Steele to march on Shreveport, that he was anxious to defeat Banks at the earliest possible moment in order to be able to stop Steele before he reached his objective. But whatever was done, Taylor continued, it must be done quickly. "Action, prompt, vigorous action, is required. While we are deliberating the enemy is marching. King James lost three kingdoms for a mass. We may lose three States without a battle." [90] Taylor's old commander would have approved that letter; time was always precious to Stonewall Jackson.

Nevertheless it was still up to the commanding general to decide what course to follow, and Taylor, quite rightly, made no attempt to decide for him—an unusual display of restraint on his part. As a result Smith determined to go to Mansfield where he could confer personally with Taylor. Arriving there on April 6, he again expressed his inclination to march against

[88] *Ibid.*, Part ii, pp. 1062–63.

[89] *Ibid.*, Part i, pp. 521–22.

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 522. This letter is susceptible of two interpretations (cf. Joseph H. Parks, *General Edmund Kirby Smith* [Baton Rouge, 1954], p. 384), but in another message sent to Shreveport that same day Taylor said the following: "The inclosed dispatch of this date from General Liddell would appear to indicate an effort on the enemy's part to advance by water. From the information I have received all of Green's cavalry force should reach me within the next thirty-six or forty-eight hours. Under these circumstances, unless I receive instructions to the contrary from department headquarters, I shall move on Natchitoches as soon as the re-enforcements from Texas reach me, and thus check the farther advance of Banks' column." (*O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 522–23.)

Steele first with the bulk of the Trans-Mississippi army. Evidently in a troubled state of mind, Smith also mentioned the possibility of standing siege in Shreveport, or even of retreating into Texas, lines of action that Taylor vehemently rejected. When he left for Shreveport that afternoon, the commanding general had not yet reached a decision, and as a result he left Taylor with no definite instructions.[91] On April 8, two days after he had returned to his headquarters, Kirby Smith wrote Taylor a letter of instructions peculiar for its ambiguity and hidden meaning:

> A general engagement now could not be given with our full force. Reenforcements are moving up—not very large, it is true. If we fall back without a battle you will be thrown out of the best country for supplies. I would compel the enemy to develop his intentions, selecting a position in rear where we can give him battle before he can march on and occupy Shreveport. I will order down now all the armed cavalry from near Marshall and forward Pratt's battery from this point with every available man before a battle is fought. Let me know as soon as you are convinced that a general advance is being made and I will come to the front.[92]

Orders could scarcely have been more obscure. Reinforcements are available, but they are small (one battery and some cavalry); a general engagement would not now be wise—but you should "compel the enemy to develop his intentions"; do not retreat, but select a position "in rear." The only clear thing in this order is the fact that Kirby Smith wanted Taylor to avoid a battle with Banks, but when the engagement seemed inevitable, Smith wished to be notified in time to arrive before the fighting began. According to Brigadier General William R. Boggs, chief of staff of the department, this plan was hatched by Surgeon Sol Smith, who disliked Taylor as much as he liked the command-

[91] This reconstruction of the interview is a composite, with certain omissions, of the sparse accounts found in *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 480, 485; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 371; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 159.

[92] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 528.

ing general. "Taylor was to harass Banks up to the last moment and then General Smith was to move down with additional troops, take command, and carry off the glory of the pitched battle." [93] Significantly Kirby Smith himself later remarked that "I hoped to derive an element of morale from the arrival of Churchill's command [94] and my own presence at the moment of action." [95] But Smith was not to be allowed to play Blücher to Taylor's Wellington. Events moved too swiftly, and by the time his letter of the 8th was delivered, the battle had already begun.

On April 7 the head of the Union infantry column reached Pleasant Hill. Probing on in advance were three brigades of Lee's cavalry division. Thus far all had gone well for the troopers. Due to Taylor's almost complete lack of mounted troops at the opening of the campaign, the Federal cavalry had so far encountered the enemy only in minor skirmishes, and it was still a question as to how the men would perform in a large-scale engagement. Lee himself must have frequently brooded on this subject, for his command was not one that would ordinarily inspire its leader with much confidence. Of the ten regiments Lee had with him in the advance, five were mounted infantry. In the words of Brigadier General William Dwight, these men "were not good riders, and did not understand how to take care of their horses properly. They were infantry soldiers who had been put on horseback. . . ." [96] On the afternoon of the 7th Lee's amateur equestrians encountered four

[93] William K. Boyd, ed., *Military Reminiscences of Gen. Wm. R. Boggs* (Durham, 1913), pp. 75–76.

[94] Then at Keatchie, twenty miles northwest of Mansfield.

[95] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 485. (E. K. Smith to Jefferson Davis, Aug. 28, 1864, Sol Smith acting as the general's amanuensis.)

[96] *Com. Con. War,* p. 185; see also *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 449. The First, Third, and Fourth Brigades were with Lee. The Fifth was guarding the infantry train.

regiments of Green's cavalry at Wilson's Farm, three miles beyond Pleasant Hill, and a lively action was opened. On this occasion the Confederates, instead of falling back, charged with a yell, much to the consternation of the Federals. After some hot exchanges, Northern reserves rallied to the support of the leading brigade, which had borne the brunt of the charge, and drove back the attackers.[97] Although this affair was concluded satisfactorily from his point of view, Lee was made uneasy by the Confederates' unexpected show of strength. Somewhere in the depths of the all-concealing pine forest the enemy was waiting, and, judging from the fight at Wilson's Farm, he was in greater force than ever before. Lee felt that his position was insecure, not to say dangerous. Unless they dismounted, his men were usually confined to a single narrow road. At their backs, stretching out for two or three miles, was the excessively large cavalry train, which not only required a large number of guards but which would also be a serious, perhaps fatal, incumbrance in case of a reverse. Several times Lee had asked Franklin to allow him to place his wagons with those of the infantry, in the rear of the 19th Corps, but the latter always refused, saying that it was the cavalry's business to look after its own train.[98] To further heighten his anxiety, Lee got the distinct impression that "the theory was pretty well seated in the minds of the commanding officers that we were not to have any fighting until we got to Shreveport. . . . I was laughed at for insisting that we would have a fight before we got to Shreveport. . . ." [99]

But the leader of the advance guard, carrying his men through a strange country in the face of an unseen enemy of unknown strength, could not afford to laugh. Colonel John S. Clark, an officer of Banks's staff, rode out to see Lee on the

[97] *Com. Con. War,* p. 58; *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 450, 616–17.
[98] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 32, 59, 88.
[99] *Ibid.,* p. 64.

evening of the 7th and found him much depressed at the resistance he had encountered, and when Clark returned to Pleasant Hill he carried a request from Lee to Franklin for infantry support. Franklin flatly refused. He had little confidence in the cavalry, and he doubtless believed that since horses can run faster than men, his infantry would be left in the lurch in case Lee's men met with defeat.[100] Clark then went to Banks, who had arrived at Pleasant Hill late in the day, and the general immediately directed that a brigade of infantry be sent to Lee's support. Therefore Franklin ordered Brigadier General T. E. G. Ransom, commanding the detachment of the 13th Corps, to send either a brigade or a division to Lee at daybreak, preferably a division, since the brigades of that corps were small. Ransom exercised the discretion allowed him and sent only the First Brigade of the Fourth Division, probably little more than 1200 effectives.[101]

On the evening of April 7 Franklin instructed Lee to advance as far as possible with his whole force, train included, so that the infantry would have room to move forward the next day. The cavalry was then about six miles beyond Pleasant Hill, and in response to this order it moved on four miles farther, reaching Carroll's Mill at nightfall. There the Confederate horsemen made a stand in a strong position and put a halt to the Federals' progress for that day.[102]

On the morning of the 8th General Franklin went to Banks and explained to him the plan of march he had decided upon. He intended to proceed to a point ten miles west of Pleasant Hill with the infantry and trains of the 13th and 19th Corps and bivouac there for the day. This would allow the weary men

[100] *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 59–60, 194–95; cf. Irwin, *19th Corps*, p. 298.

[101] *Com. Con. War*, pp. 29, 59–60, 194–95; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 167, 290; Part iii, 72. The entire Fourth Division had only 2659 present for duty. Each of its two brigades had four regiments.

[102] *Com. Con. War*, 58–59.

and animals to rest, give the long column a chance to close up, and permit A. J. Smith's divisions to encamp at Pleasant Hill, where Franklin's men then were. Banks gave his approval to these arrangements.[103]

In obedience to his orders from Ransom, Colonel William J. Landram, commanding the Fourth Division, 13th Corps, had Colonel Frank Emerson's brigade at the cavalry camp soon after daylight on April 8.[104] Shortly after sunrise Lee's column was moving. Resistance was met from the start, and it was necessary for part of the cavalry to dismount and join the infantry on foot in the thick undergrowth. Driving the Confederates steadily, the Federals came upon the enemy's camps of the night before, finding evidence of hasty departure in the form of corn cakes and bacon spread out on logs and stumps.[105]

Advancing slowly, skirmishing continually, and using their artillery as much as possible, Lee's men had covered about six miles by noon. At that time the Northern line suddenly emerged from the forest and came into a large clearing, 800 yards across and 1200 from left to right. Stretching through the center of the clearing and perpendicular to the road was a large hill, crowned by a scattered growth of trees. On the crest of this hill stood a line of Confederate skirmishers. As Colonel Landram gazed at this position, it seemed too strong for his small brigade to attempt to take; his men had done more than their share of the fighting and were very jaded. Lee nevertheless ordered him forward, and to Landram's surprise the enemy gave way easily. The Federals took possession of the hill and skirmishers were sent forward half a mile. There in the edge of the heavy woods on the far side of the clearing they found not merely the light cavalry forces previously encountered, but

[103] *Ibid.*, p. 30; Irwin, *19th Corps*, p. 300.
[104] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 290.
[105] Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, pp. 143–44.

—ominous fact—both infantry and cavalry in line of battle.[106]

In the meantime the leading elements of Franklin's infantry reached Ten Mile Bayou, site of Carroll's Mill, ten miles west of Pleasant Hill.[107] Details of men were put to work rebuilding the bridge over the bayou; troops of the 13th Corps began to bivouac as they arrived. Banks joined Franklin there at about eleven in the morning, and at approximately the same hour Franklin received a request from Lee for another brigade of infantry to relieve the one that had been with him throughout the morning. Designating the other brigade of Landram's division for this purpose, Franklin directed General Ransom to accompany it to the front to ensure that it really relieved the brigade then with Lee and was not merely put in line beside it.[108]

After he had been at Ten Mile Bayou for half an hour, Banks decided to go to the front in person, telling Franklin that if there was no heavy fighting he would return. "There will be no fighting," said Franklin. "I will go forward and see," his commander replied.[109] Following on the heels of Ransom's infantry, which he overtook and passed on the way, Banks arrived on the field around one o'clock and found his men skirmishing with the Confederates. He sent for Lee and had him describe the situation. When he had finished, Banks asked him what he thought should be done.[110]

> I told him [Lee later said] that in my opinion we must fall back immediately, or we must be very heavily re-enforced. I said that the

[106] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 60–62; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 291, 456; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 160–61. The hill was called Honeycutt Hill, according to John G. Belisle, *History of Sabine Parish Louisiana* ([Many, La.], 1912), p. 159.

[107] Of the Federals only Col. Francis Fessenden, 30th Maine, gave this stream its correct name. All the others mistook it for Bayou San Patricio, of which Ten Mile Bayou is a tributary.

[108] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 32, 61–62, 68.

[109] *Ibid.,* p. 10.

[110] *Ibid.,* pp. 10, 60.

enemy must have some 15,000 or 20,000 men there; four or five times as many as I had. I told him how my troops were disposed. He approved of the disposition, said I must retain the position I had occupied, and he would send back immediately to hurry up the infantry, which must then be very near.[111]

Accordingly, Banks sent the following note to Franklin:

The commanding general desires me to say that the enemy are apparently prepared to make a strong stand at this point, and that you had better make arrangements to bring up your infantry, and to pass everything on the road. The general will send again when to move. He thinks you had better send back and push up the trains, as manifestly we shall be able to rest here. . . .

George B. Drake,
Assistant Adjutant General.[112]

A few minutes later another messenger was sent to Franklin telling him to push forward the infantry as quickly as possible. That Banks had little conception of the state of affairs confronting him is shown by the clause: "manifestly we shall be able to rest here." There was to be anything but rest for the Federals on that field.

On the afternoon of April 7, the day after Kirby Smith's visit to Mansfield, Dick Taylor galloped down the road to where Tom Green and his plainsmen were engaged in obstructing the advance of the Federals. Late in the day, after the enemy had been brought to a halt at Carroll's Mill, Taylor turned and rode back toward Mansfield. He had determined to make a stand the next day, and on his way back to headquarters he stopped to select the position he would defend—the clearing and hill

111 *Ibid.*, p. 60. Evidently Banks was referring to the brigade that he had passed on the road.

112 *Ibid.*, p. 30. See also Ransom to Franklin, April 30, 1864, William B. Franklin Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress.

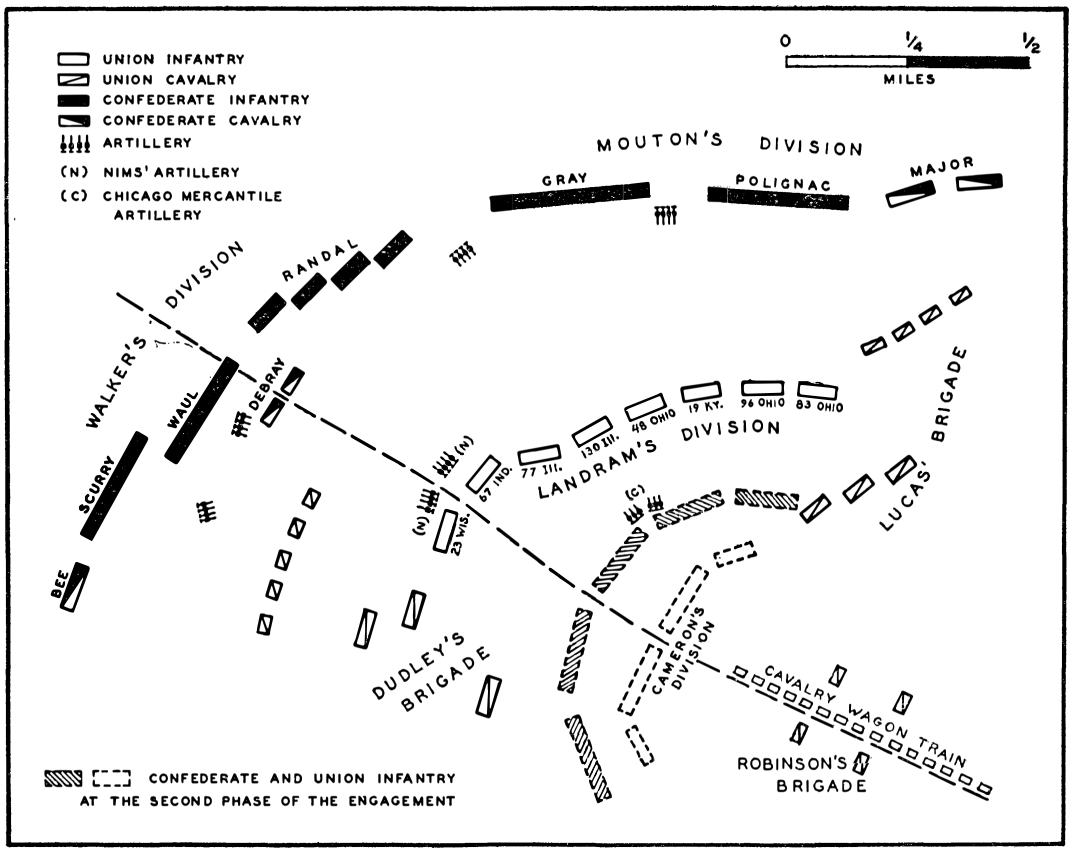


FIGURE 5. Battle of Mansfield, or Sabine Crossroads

already described. He could not afford to postpone the battle until the enemy reached Mansfield, for once past that town Taylor knew that "the enemy would have three roads, one of which would be near his fleet on the river." [113] Far better it was to strike while Banks's army was strung out thinly on a single narrow road.

Taylor began his preparations immediately. The infantry from Price's army, 4400 effectives, was ordered to Mansfield from Keatchie at dawn on the 8th, a distance of about twenty miles. The army's medical director was instructed to prepare houses in Mansfield for future use as hospitals. A guard was stationed in the town to preserve order and especially to prevent any panic or stampede among the teamsters. Quartermasters set about collecting supplies and placing surplus wagons out of harm's way.[114] Walker and Mouton were ordered to start early the next morning from their camps a short distance north of Mansfield and march to the selected position, three miles on the other side of the town.[115]

Having completed these arrangements, Taylor sent off a message to Kirby Smith at about nine that evening in which he inquired: "I respectfully ask to know if it accords with the views of the lieutenant-general commanding that I should hazard a general engagement at this point, and request an immediate answer, that I may receive it before daylight to-morrow morning." [116] If his superior could not make up his mind now, Dick Taylor was disposed to take matters into his own hands. "My confidence of success," he wrote after the war, "was inspired by accurate knowledge of the Federal movements, as well as the character of their commander General Banks, whose measure had been taken in the Virginia campaigns of 1862 and

[113] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 159.
[114] *Ibid.,* p. 161; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 563.
[115] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 161; Blessington, *Walker's Division,* pp. 181–83.
[116] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 526; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 161.

since." [117] To Prince Polignac he said, "I will fight Banks if he has a million men." [118]

At 9:40 the next morning, while a part of Green's cavalry was harassing the approaching Unionists, Taylor sent another note to what he called the "Aulic Council" at Shreveport. Reporting the advance of the enemy, he concluded by saying that "I consider this as favorable a point to engage him as any other." [119] The remainder of the morning Taylor employed in getting his troops into position along the Sabine River - Bayou Pierre road, which ran through the woods on the northwest side of the clearing. On the extreme right of the line were two regiments of cavalry led by Brigadier General Hamilton P. Bee. Immediately on Bee's left was Walker's division of Texans, with the brigades of Scurry, Waul, and Randal from right to left in that order, with two batteries of artillery. Across the Mansfield road, which ran through the center of the Southern position, were Debray's regiment of cavalry and McMahan's battery. Next was Mouton's division, with its right flank resting near the north side of the road.[120] The right brigade of this division, led by Colonel Henry Gray, was composed of Louisianans. Embittered by the destructive Federal invasion as well as by rumors that their state was to be abandoned without a fight, these men were still further inflamed by Taylor, who told them, as he rode along the line, that he wanted them to draw first blood.[121]

Commanding Mouton's left brigade was Camille Armand Jules Marie, Prince de Polignac, belonging to "that race of historic gentry whose ancestors rallied to the white plume of Henry at Ivry, and followed the charge of Conde at Rocroy,"

[117] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 161.

[118] Mary L. B. Bankston, *Camp-Fire Stories of the Mississippi Valley Campaign* (New Orleans, 1914), p. 148.

[119] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 526.

[120] *Ibid.,* pp. 563–64; Blessington, *Walker's Division,* pp. 185–86; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 162.

[121] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 162.

whose patience, good temper, and personal valor had completely won the loyalty of his Texans.[122] Holding the extreme left of the Confederate line was Brigadier General James Major's small division of cavalry.[123] Since Churchill's command had not had time to reach the field, this completed the roster of Taylor's little army. It totaled not more than 8800 of all arms, 5800 infantry and artillery and 3000 cavalry.[124]

Shortly after noon the Southerners saw Union troops begin to emerge from the woods on the far side of the clearing. Soon Taylor believed he saw the enemy massing for an attack on the Confederate left. To meet this threat he shifted Randal's brigade from the right to the left of the road in support of Mouton, and sent one of Bee's regiments to reinforce Major. By four o'clock these final dispositions were complete.[125]

Across the field the Federals were strengthened by the arrival at about 3:30 of Landram's other brigade. Once more united, the Fourth Division had about 2400 muskets at hand. Colonel Thomas Lucas' brigade of cavalry covered the right flank of the infantry, and "Gold Lace" Dudley's held the left, bringing the total of Union forces on the field to about 4800 effectives of all arms.[126] About half a mile behind the line was the head of Lee's wagon train, which had crossed the bridge at Ten Mile Bayou late in the morning.[127]

Not long before four o'clock, Lee, who had gone back to the front after his conference with Banks early in the afternoon,

[122] *Ibid.*, pp. 153–54, 162–63; Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, 1940), pp. 167–70.

[123] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 563.

[124] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 162. Effective strength.

[125] *Ibid.*; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 564. Actually Landram was only shifting his line to meet a possible flanking attack by the Confederates. (*O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 291.)

[126] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 167, 264, 266; Irwin, *19th Corps*, p. 303. Col. Harai Robinson's brigade of cavalry (two regiments) is not included here, although it was engaged in the latter part of the action.

[127] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 464; *Com. Con. War*, p. 61.

was startled by one of Banks's staff officers who rode up and informed him that the commanding general desired him to move immediately on Mansfield, three miles beyond the lines of the enemy. Lee protested that there must be some mistake, but as the messenger insisted that there was not, Lee rode over to see Banks. To the cavalryman's further astonishment, Banks told him that the order had been delivered correctly; that was what he wanted done. "I told him," Lee said subsequently, "we could not advance ten minutes without a general engagement, in which we should be most gloriously flogged, and I did not want to do it." After further expostulations by Lee, the confused Banks finally agreed to postpone the advance, and hurried off another staff officer to bring up more infantry.[128]

Meanwhile Dick Taylor's small stock of patience had been exhausted. Four o'clock had arrived, and still the enemy did nothing. Only a few hours of daylight were left. If anything was to be done it must be done now. Taylor sent word to Mouton to open the attack from the left. The Creole unleashed his eager Texans and Louisianans, and they swept across the field before them in a magnificent charge.[129] Ransom had seen them coming and had advanced his five right regiments to meet the Confederates, and the two lines opened with a crash of musketry at short range. Mouton's first line was checked and pushed back to about 200 yards from Ransom's right.[130] Here the fighting was extremely hot. Mouton's division was supported on its right by Randal's brigade, advancing in echelon of regiments from the left, and on its other flank by the cavalry of Major, who was exhorting his men to give the Yankees hell.[131] Men were falling fast, and among the first to be killed

[128] *Com. Con. War,* p. 61.

[129] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 564.

[130] *Ibid.,* pp. 266–67, 295–96, 300–301; Irwin, *19th Corps,* p. 304.

[131] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 564; Rebecca W. Smith and Marion Mullins, eds., "The Diary of H. C. Medford, Confederate Soldier, 1864," [Part II] *Southwestern Historical Quarterly,* XXXIV (1930–31), 218.

was the beloved Mouton. He was followed by Colonel Leopold Armant, 18th Louisiana (Creoles), Colonel James Beard, Crescent Regiment, and several other field officers. The Crescent Regiment lost over 200 men in killed and wounded, including seven standard-bearers, and Mouton's division as a whole ended by losing over one-third of its strength in killed and wounded.[132] The troops in this action on the north side of the road, including Randal's brigade, were under the general command of Tom Green.[133]

Taylor sat on his black horse watching the battle, a cigar in his mouth and one leg thrown across the saddle.[134] When he saw that the attack on the left was well under way, he ordered Walker to move forward and turn the enemy's left flank, while the cavalry of Bee and Debray gained his rear.[135] The Texans swept down on the Federals with a rush—"like a cyclone," said a Northern soldier. "Yelling like infuriated demons" they came, brushing aside the 3d Massachusetts Cavalry and closing up the swaths cut in their ranks by the accurate fire of Ormand Nims's fine battery.[136] They charged up the hill, flanking and driving back the 23d Wisconsin and 67th Indiana, capturing three of Nims's guns and turning them on the Yankees. Hearing of Walker's movement, Ransom ordered the 83d Ohio to shift from the extreme right of the Union line to the extreme left. The colonel of the 83d protested that he was already flanked on the right, but the order stood, and when his regiment

132 Bankston, *Camp-Fire Stories,* pp. 152–53; John Dimitry, "Louisiana," in *Confederate Military History,* Vol. x (Atlanta, 1899), 140–41; Bartlett, "The Trans-Mississippi," *Mil. Rec. of La.,* pp. 13, 42; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 564.

133 *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 564.

134 Bartlett, "The Trans-Mississippi," *Mil. Rec. of La.,* p. 13.

135 *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 564.

136 R. B. Scott, *The History of the 67th Regiment Indiana Infantry* (Bedford, Ind., 1892), pp. 71–72; Frank M. Flinn, *Campaigning with Banks* (Lynn, Mass., 1887), p. 108; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 462. According to Flinn, "each piece was loaded with a case of grape and canister, spherical case shell, and a sack of bullets containing about three hundred."

was led by General Stone to the designated position, it was found that the left flank had dissolved.[137]

Outflanked on both ends of his line and threatened with encirclement, Ransom decided to withdraw to the woods at the edge of the clearing. Because of the death of Ransom's adjutant, some of the right regiments were not notified, and many of their men were forced to surrender. The 48th Ohio and 130th Illinois were virtually wiped out.[138] The brigade commanders, Emerson and Vance, both were wounded and captured, and Ransom himself was severely wounded.[139]

As the Union line fell back in confusion to the edge of the woods, reinforcements arrived. Led by Franklin and Cameron, the Third Division of the 13th Corps, moving at the double-quick, formed line athwart the Mansfield road and pushed forward to the clearing. Elements of Dudley's cavalry rallied on Cameron's left, where Lieutenant Colonel Lorenzo Thomas of the 3d Massachusetts attempted to steady his men by suggesting that they "try to think that you are dead and buried, and you will have no fear." [140]

The new line checked the Confederates for the better part of an hour, but Franklin was not deceived by this temporary success. He sent word back to Brigadier General William H. Emory to march forward at once with the First Division of the 19th Corps and form a line of battle at the first good position he could find.[141] The disaster was not long in coming. Overborne by numbers, outflanked on right and left, the Federals gave way in panic and utter rout. "Suddenly," wrote a Northern newspaperman, "suddenly there was a rush, a shout, the

[137] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 266–67, 300–301; T. B. Marshall, *History of the Eighty-Third Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1913), p. 134.

[138] John A. Bering and Thomas Montgomery, *History of the Forty-Eighth Ohio* (Hillsboro, O., 1880), p. 132; Belisle, *Sabine Parish*, p. 161.

[139] Irwin, *19th Corps*, p. 304; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 273–74, 292, 302.

[140] Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, p. 156; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 273–74.

[141] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 257, 273–74.

crashing of trees, the breaking down of rails, the rush and scamper of men. . . . I turned to my companion to inquire the reason of this extraordinary proceeding, but before he had the chance to reply, we found ourselves swallowed up, as it were, in a hissing, seething, bubbling whirlpool of agitated men." [142] Franklin lost his horse and was painfully wounded in the left tibia. Banks, with his usual personal courage, rode about in the thick of the melee trying to rally his fleeing army. "Form a line here," he called to some of his men, "I know you will not desert me." But on they ran. Guns, knapsacks, blankets—everything was thrown away by the frantic soldiers as the hue and cry of the exultant Southerners rang in their ears.[143] Surgeon John Homans complained that his knees were severely bruised by the fugitives as he rode through the mob, and at one place he observed a line of men tailed out behind a single tree in an effort to escape the singing Minié balls.[144] Pandemonium was still further increased as the stampeding men converged on the road, for there they found their path obstructed by the cavalry train. As usual the teamsters had been among the first to panic, and after futile attempts to turn their wagons in the narrow road and drive to the rear, they had cut the mules from the traces and fled. The bare-tongued wagons formed an obstacle that the retreating artillery could not pass, and gun after gun was abandoned to Taylor's men.[145]

While the men of the cavalry and the 13th Corps were scrambling past the wagons and through the thick woods in

[142] Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events* (New York, 1862–71), VIII, 548. The reporter was John Russell Young.

[143] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 273–74; Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, p. 149; Scott, *67th Indiana*, p. 72; Smith and Mullins, eds., "Medford Diary," *Southwestern Hist. Qrly.*, p. 218; Hoffman, *Camp, Court and Siege*, p. 89; undated medical certificate, Franklin Papers; Shorey, *15th Maine*, pp. 83–84; John M. Stanyan, *A History of the Eighth Regiment of New Hampshire Volunteers* (Concord, N. H., 1892), 409.

[144] Homans, *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.*, VIII, 80.

[145] Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, p. 155; Flinn, *Campaigning with Banks*, p. 109; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 257.

a desperate effort to get beyond the enemy's reach, Emory's division was on the march from Ten Mile Bayou. On the way Emory received several dispatches from Franklin and from Banks directing him to push on to a position where a stand could be made.[146] As the division hurried on, evidence of a defeat at the front became more tangible. "Having gone on about five miles," a 19th Corps soldier related, "on came a negro, bareheaded, and running as if for life. Soon came more, and then by hundreds, on foot and mounted; nor knew they scarcely why they ran, only that the rebels were coming. Then came cavalry, infantry, artillery, and wagons, crowding the road and each side, making advance almost an impossibility." [147]

> Still thicker and denser came the frightened crowd [wrote another soldier], rushing past in every possible manner. Men without hats or coats, men without guns or accoutrements, cavalrymen without horses, and artillerymen without cannon, wounded men bleeding and crying at every step, men begrimed with smoke and powder—all in a state of fear and frenzy, while they shouted to our boys not to go forward any further, for they would all be slaughtered. . . . The road was almost blocked up with wagons, caissons, mules and runaway horses, while negro teamsters and cavalrymen were driving directly through the ranks.[148]

Making his way through the mob as best he could, Emory led his men to within two miles of the battlefield and halted at a place called Pleasant Grove. Here, along the eastern side of a ravine through which ran a small stream, he deployed his brigades.[149] Fugitives continued to swarm in from the west, and it

[146] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 391–92.

[147] Lydia M. Post, ed., *Soldiers' Letters from Camp, Battlefield and Prison* (New York, 1865), pp. 357–58.

[148] Beecher, *114th New York*, p. 311.

[149] The position was also known as Chapman's (or Chatman's) Hill. See Belisle, *Sabine Parish*, p. 163.

was a joyful sight for them when they caught sight of Emory's red division flag.[150]

Close on their heels came the Confederates. Taylor's men had become disorganized by the long pursuit through difficult terrain, and some of Green's cavalry had not yet come up. Nevertheless the Federal line was immediately assaulted in front and on the flanks. The position was a strong one and Emory's fresh troops held fast. All the Southerners could accomplish before darkness put an end to the fighting was to drive back the Union skirmishers and take possession of the creek, a matter of much importance in that comparatively waterless country.[151] As the firing died away, Banks's weary men listened to the shouts of the Confederates as they rioted in the good things on the captured train. Later came the sound of the wagons as they rumbled off toward Mansfield. In the darkness the Southerners could be distinctly heard as they formed companies and called rolls, and once there rang out the clear tones of a bugle sounding cavalry calls. After that the silence was broken only by the cries of the wounded calling for water.[152]

The battle of Sabine Crossroads, or Mansfield, as the Confederates called it, was fought in three stages. The first took place in the clearing, where two brigades of Lee's cavalry and the Fourth Division of the 13th Corps received the shock of Taylor's opening attack. The second occurred in the woods along the southeast edge of the clearing, where the survivors of the first action were joined by Cameron's division. The third was

150 *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 389, 392; Hoffman, *Camp, Court and Siege,* p. 89; Pellet, *114th New York,* pp. 195–96.

151 *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 392, 421–22, 429, 606–607, 616–17; Clark, *116th New York,* pp. 155–57; Williams, *56th Ohio,* p. 66; *162d New York,* pp. 25–26; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 164.

152 Hoffman, *Camp, Court and Siege,* p. 91; Pellet, *114th New York,* p. 202; *Com. Con. War,* p. 218. Taylor categorically denied that his men looted the train. (*O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 565.) There was probably some looting of which Taylor was not aware. (Cf. Stanyan, *8th New Hampshire,* pp. 404–405.)

the repulse of the Confederates by Emory some two miles down the road from the original battlefield. The Fourth Division, which bore the brunt of the fighting in the clearing, sustained the largest number of casualties: 25 killed, 95 wounded, 1015 missing. Unquestionably many of the missing were either killed or wounded, but however the number in each category is apportioned, Landram lost almost half of his 2400 men. In Cameron's small division, the Third, losses were less severe, a total of 317 out of about 1300. Lee's three cavalry brigades, numbering 3000 effectives, lost 39 killed, 250 wounded, and 144 missing.[153] Thus the troops engaged in the first two stages of the battle lost 27.8 per cent in casualties. In the last stage Emory's division repulsed the Confederates at a cost of 347 killed, wounded, and missing out of a total effective force of 5100 officers and men.[154] When totaled up, Union losses came to 113 killed, 581 wounded, 1541 missing: 2235 out of a total force engaged of about 12,000.[155] To repeat, many of those listed simply

[153] There are contradictory estimates of the numbers of men of the Third and Fourth Divisions, 13th Corps, on the field. For the Fourth Division (Landram's) there are four figures: 2413, 2659, 2687, and 2818. (*O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 167, 263, 292, 295.) Landram in his report specifically stated that he carried 2413 men into action, and this figure has been adopted, although it is quite possible a slight underestimate. For the Third Division (Cameron's) there are three figures: 1293, 2114, and 2042. (*Ibid.,* pp. 167, 263–64, 273.) As in the previous case, the lowest figure (1293) is accepted, since Cameron gave it as the total number of officers and men of his division on the field. The figure for the cavalry was reached by dividing the number present for duty in the whole division on March 31 (4653) by the number of regiments (13), giving an average regimental strength of 358. This was multiplied by 10 (the number of regiments engaged, including those of Robinson's brigade) giving 3580, plus a detached company of the Fifth Brigade, estimated at 50; total: 3630. Following Livermore's method of calculating effectives from those present for duty (a deduction of 15% for cavalry, 7% in the case of infantry), an effective total engaged for the cavalry was reached: 3085. (*Ibid.,* pp. 167, 171, 452; Thomas L. Livermore, *Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America, 1861–65* [Boston and New York, 1901], pp. 66–70.)

[154] This division carried 5500 present for duty to Pleasant Grove (153d New York and division artillery were left behind). Following Livermore's method, this figure yields 5115 effectives (*O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 263, 421).

[155] In his memoirs Taylor claimed 2500 prisoners (*Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 164), probably including noncombatants.

as missing were doubtless killed or wounded. Loss of matériel was unusually heavy. Many small arms, twenty pieces of artillery, at least 156 government-owned wagons, and close to 1000 horses and mules were lost to Taylor's men.[156]

Little can be said of Taylor's losses, the return of casualties having been lost. Out of 8800 effectives, 1000 were killed and wounded; there is no record of the number missing, but it was probably very small. At least two-thirds of the casualties were suffered by Mouton's division. So far as is known, there was no loss of matériel.[157]

Battle statistics can sometimes be misleading, but in this case there can be no doubt that Taylor won a stunning victory at Sabine Crossroads. From the time A. J. Smith landed at Simmesport until the moment Mouton charged across the clearing, Taylor's strategy and tactics had been of a high order. His long retreat before the overwhelming numbers of the enemy was the course of wisdom. Until his reinforcements came up it would have been foolhardy of him to attack Banks, especially while the latter was in touch with Porter's fleet. The losses of men and property at Fort De Russy and Henderson's Hill could not be laid at Taylor's door. The former was constructed and occupied by order of Kirby Smith, and Vincent's humiliation was entirely the result of a lack of vigilance on the part of undisciplined troops.

Once past Mansfield, as already pointed out, Banks would have had three parallel roads at his disposal, one of them near the river. That being the case, Taylor's decision to fight south of the town was strategically sound. It was a decision, more-

156 Irwin, *19th Corps,* p. 306; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 452. Taylor claimed 250 wagons. Apparently there was a large number of private wagons with Lee's train that were not listed in quartermaster records since they were not owned by the government. Army wagons were usually drawn by six mules or, less frequently, four horses.

157 Livermore, *Numbers and Losses,* p. 110; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 553; cf. Bartlett, "The Trans-Mississippi," *Mil. Rec. of La.,* pp. 13, 42.

over, that took considerable moral courage, for Taylor fought without orders from Kirby Smith, and he must have realized that he would have to take the blame for any defeat. At that it was a near thing, for while the battle was in progress a messenger brought a letter[158] from Smith directing Taylor to avoid a general engagement. "Too late, sir," he told the courier, "the battle is won."[159]

In looking at Taylor's tactics at Sabine Crossroads, it seems possible that even greater results might have been obtained if he had advanced his whole line simultaneously, rather than throwing in his troops successively from left to right, although this is by no means certain. At first glance it might appear that Taylor made a mistake in not ordering the infantry from Price's army to march on to Mansfield on April 6, the day it reached Keatchie, rather than waiting until the evening of the 7th, but in view of Kirby Smith's indecision Taylor's explanation seems reasonable. "Supplies were far from abundant in the vicinity of Mansfield; and as I might at any moment receive an order to retire to Kea[t]chie, they were directed to remain there for the present."[160] Even so, Brigadier General James C. Tappan's division, which arrived at Mansfield at 3:30 P.M. on the 8th, probably could have reached the field in time to join the fight, but instead Taylor ordered Tappan to take position on the Gravelly Point road to guard against a flank movement by the Federals.[161] It is likely, however, that the absence of these troops made little difference in the outcome of the battle. On such a restricted field more men may well have been a hindrance rather than a help.

A few days after the battle of April 8, General Banks wrote

158 Quite probably the letter quoted above, p. 123.

159 Sarah A. Dorsey, *Recollections of Henry Watkins Allen* (New York, 1866), p. 263.

160 Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 159–60.

161 *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 604.

his wife that the "disaster that occurred was from the folly of one of our officers in running up a large train of waggons & artillery to the lines of the enemy so that in falling back we left them in his hands. It was not from his power or capacity." [162] As might be expected, this analysis of the action was not entirely objective. The position of the train had nothing whatever to do with the tactical defeat of Lee, Landram, and Cameron; all the train did was to impede the flight of the Federals once the rout began. Had there been no rout, neither wagons nor artillery would have been lost. So while it cannot be denied that the cavalry train should not have been where it was, the real reasons for Banks's defeat must be sought elsewhere.

Banks committed his first serious mistake when he put his army on the inland road from Grand Ecore to Mansfield. His true line of advance was the road that ran along the right bank of the Red. Ignorance of this route was no excuse. The army was at Grand Ecore for five days; Banks himself was there for over three days. If he did not have time to make an extended reconnaissance along the river, at least he had ample opportunity for exhaustive inquiries among contrabands and the local white population, a few of whom were undoubtedly Union sympathizers. That such inquiries were not made [163] indicates a serious lack of vigilance on the part of both Banks and his chief of staff, General Stone. Evidently they allowed themselves to be guided by the information supplied by one man, Withenbury.

The second Federal error was the order of march from Grand Ecore. On April 5, the day before the army left Grand Ecore, Stone sent Franklin the following communication:

[162] Banks to his wife, April 13, 1864, Banks Papers.

[163] Withenbury's testimony (*Com. Con. War,* p. 287) indicates that Banks decided to take the inland road on April 3, the day the general arrived at Grand Ecore.

> General: The major-general commanding desires that you advance tomorrow morning with your command on the roads to Shreveport. The main force of the enemy was at last accounts in the vicinity of Mansfield, on the stage road between Natchitoches and Shreveport, and the major-general commanding desires to force him to give battle, if possible, before he can concentrate his forces behind the fortifications of Shreveport or effect a retreat westerly into Texas. You will therefore please march your column with this object in view, and in such order as to be able to throw as much as possible of your force into battle at any time on the march.[164]

Thus Franklin was left to arrange the details of the order of march. In his circular of the next day he allotted three brigades of Lee's division for the advance guard, from 3000 to 3500 troopers.[165] By the time they reached Pleasant Hill on April 7, both Banks and Franklin should have realized that their large cavalry force was of comparatively little use in such heavily wooded country. Lee's request for infantry was an admission of this fact. Moreover, the cavalry was separated from the head of the infantry column by at least two or three miles (the length of the cavalry train), and usually by a much greater distance. As brought out previously, Franklin would not allow Lee to put his wagons with those of the infantry train.

Therefore at Pleasant Hill, Banks and Franklin should have (1) reduced the advance guard to not more than one brigade of cavalry; (2) placed the wagons of all but the leading brigade of cavalry in the rear of the infantry train; (3) placed the wagons of the leading brigade ahead of the infantry train. In addition to getting the cavalry train out of danger, this arrangement would have made a heavy infantry force available in case the cavalry encountered a large body of the enemy. But these things were not done. Instead of reducing the advance guard, Banks augmented it by a small brigade of infantry. "I did it," he said, "upon the idea that the advance guard

164 *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part iii, 46.
165 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 58.

should be composed of cavalry for celerity, artillery for force, and infantry for solidity," a pronouncement that aptly illustrates the vague nature of Banks's ideas on military matters.[166]

Largely as a result of the faulty order of march, the Union army was strung out over twenty miles of road. When the battle opened on the afternoon of April 8, A. J. Smith was approaching Pleasant Hill from the east, Emory was ten miles on the other side of the town, Cameron was on the march from Emory's position to the front, and Lee and Landram were six miles beyond Emory at Sabine Crossroads. With an over-all numerical superiority of about 2.5 to 1, Banks was outnumbered by the Confederates at every point of contact. In all probability the approach of night was all that prevented Emory from sharing the defeat of Lee, Landram, and Cameron.

As the commanding general, Banks must shoulder final responsibility for the two blunders that brought defeat. Yet it must also be acknowledged that his mistakes did not spring from any lack of courage or intelligence, but rather from his complete lack of military training. In any assessment of blame, the system responsible for placing such men in important commands cannot be overlooked.

[166] *Com. Con. War,* p. 11.

CHAPTER V

*

Taylor Is Disappointed at Pleasant Hill

*

BANKS, WHO WAS SELDOM LACKING in pugnacity, was encouraged by the repulse of the Confederates at Pleasant Grove and decided to hold his ground there. A staff officer was sent back to A. J. Smith at Pleasant Hill with an order directing the troops of the 16th Corps to move immediately to the front;[1] it was expected that Smith would be up by daylight. But at a council of war held early in the evening Franklin expressed doubts of Smith's ability to arrive in time. Besides that, there was no adequate supply of water for the thousands of men and animals, since the Confederates were in possession of the creek that ran in front of the position. General Dwight, commanding the First Brigade of Emory's division, was asked for his opinion, and he advised a prompt retreat. Much of the cavalry was demoralized, he believed, and the 13th Corps was so badly routed that it would not stop short of Pleasant Hill. Furthermore he did not think Smith could possibly arrive in time on the 9th.[2] Dwight was a personal friend of Banks and probably had more influence with him than anyone else then with the army. So Banks changed his mind, and before ten

[1] *Com. Con. War*, p. 77.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 179.

o'clock that night the order to begin the retirement was issued.[3]

By midnight the whole column was on the march, the remnants of the 13th Corps in advance and Dwight's brigade as rear guard.[4] It was a painful procession, impeded by the long trains and large numbers of stragglers, and it was not until 8:30 A.M. that Pleasant Hill was reached. The Federals were unmolested during the march almost to the end, when, with the village in sight, a body of Confederate horse routed some stragglers and wagons and threw the 153d New York into much disorder.[5]

Meantime on April 8, while the 13th and 19th Corps were having their difficulties, A. J. Smith's "gorillas" continued their march from Grand Ecore, camping that night in the neighborhood of an old cemetery near Pleasant Hill. Before they could bed down, rumors of disaster began to come in from the front, and it was said that the 13th Corps had been cut to pieces. At 11 P.M. an officer of Banks's staff arrived to confirm the rumors. With a spirit doubtless typical of Smith's whole command, Colonel John Scott, commanding the 32d Iowa, called his regiment into line at two in the morning, told his men the bad news, and said that "if it comes to the worst, I ask of you to show yourselves to be men." [6] At 9 A.M., just as the retreating troops began to pour in from the front, Colonel William T. Shaw's brigade [7] left the cemetery and attempted to move out to an advanced position on the Mansfield road. Finding an impassable jam of tangled wagons and teams, whose drivers were impartially damning the mules, Banks, and other officers, Shaw had to take his men across country. Fugitives streaming

[3] Hoffman, *Camp, Court and Siege,* pp. 92–93. An indication of Dwight's influence was that he soon replaced Stone as chief of staff.

[4] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 392, 422.

[5] *Ibid.,* pp. 392, 423.

[6] Scott, *32d Iowa,* pp. 136–37. Italics omitted in last clause.

[7] Second Brigade, Third Division, 16th Corps.

in from the west told these newcomers that "those who lived to return would travel faster on the return trip" and that they had better send word to their sweethearts while they were able.[8] They also passed "Whitey" Smith, sitting on his horse. "Boys," he told them, "remember where you belong!" [9]

According to his orders, Shaw reported to Emory, who directed him to relieve the brigade of Brigadier General James McMillan. Shaw found this unit south of and perpendicular to the Mansfield road, a four-gun battery in front of the right. Since this line was plainly commanded by high ground, Shaw relieved McMillan with three of his regiments and sent the fourth, the 24th Missouri, to hold the ridge on the right. The other regiments were, from right to left, the 14th, 27th, and 32d Iowa. A. J. Smith saw and approved Shaw's dispositions, only directing that the whole line be shifted to the right, a move that increased the already wide gap between Shaw's left and the right of Colonel Lewis Benedict's brigade of Emory's division.[10] The accompanying sketch illustrates the nature of these positions. As a result of the changes in the line that Shaw had made when relieving McMillan, his right was also unsupported. The left of Dwight's brigade, which had been on McMillan's right, was now in the rear of the 14th Iowa and almost at right angles to Shaw's line. Emory was aware of this situation but apparently gave no orders to rectify Dwight's position.[11] Thus Shaw's brigade, holding the most advanced position in the Federal line, was not only overextended but was unsupported on either flank.[12]

Benedict's brigade, like the other brigades of Emory's division, had been directed to take up its position on the camping ground it had occupied on April 7. In mid-afternoon on the

[8] Scott, *32d Iowa*, p. 146.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 148.
[10] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 354.
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 354, 423.
[12] Scott, *32d Iowa*, p. 202.

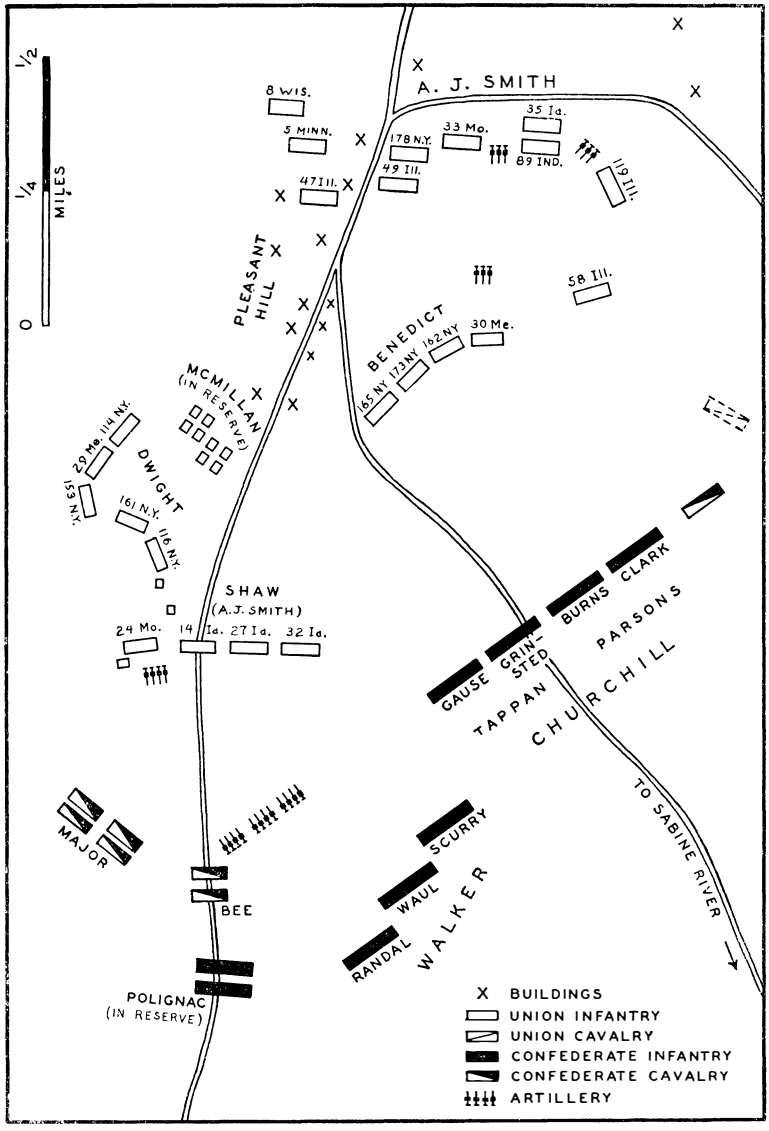


FIGURE 6. Battle of Pleasant Hill (positions at the opening of the battle)

9th it was pulled back 300 yards from the edge of a woods, and posted in a ditchlike dry slough flanked by thick undergrowth. McMillan's brigade, after being relieved by Shaw, was placed by Emory in the right rear of Dwight's brigade. Fully a mile in the left rear of Shaw's troops was the remainder of Smith's 16th Corps. The only other troops available to Banks were Lee's troopers and the survivors of the 13th Corps. The latter organization was in a badly shattered condition and could muster at most 2000 effectives. The 130th Illinois, for example, consisted of one slim youth in a coonskin hat. From the cavalry division 1000 men were selected from the First and Fifth Brigades to remain with the army. The rest of the cavalry and the 13th Corps, now commanded by Cameron, were ordered to march as a guard to the wagon train, which was sent in retreat toward Grand Ecore.[13]

As its name indicates, the field where Banks and his men lay in wait for the victorious Confederates was a slight elevation or plateau, with a considerable extent of cleared ground. The dozen or so buildings included a hotel and a college—doubtless titles of courtesy—a church, stores, and a number of handsome residences.[14] With the exception of Shaw's brigade, which was hidden in a tract of woods, most of the army was visible from a central location. "The plateau had the appearance of a parade ground on a holiday," wrote a newspaper correspondent.

> Regiments marching to the right, and regiments marching to the left, batteries being moved and shifted, cavalry squads moving single file through the brush. . . . In an enclosure near the roadside was a small cluster of gentlemen to whom all this phantasmagoria had the meaning of life and death, and power, and fame. General Banks,

[13] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 268–70, 274, 392, 417–18, 423–24, 430, 452; Marshall, *83d Ohio*, p. 137.
[14] Pellet, *114th New York*, pp. 193–94; Beecher, *114th New York*, p. 308.

> with his light blue overcoat buttoned closely around his chin, was strolling up and down, occasionally conversing with a member of his staff, or returning the salute of a passing subaltern. Near him was General William B. Franklin. . . . His face was very calm that morning, and occasionally he pull[ed] his whiskers nervously. . . . General Charles P. Stone, the chief of staff, a quiet, retiring man, who is regarded by the few that know him, as one of the finest soldiers of the time, was sitting on a rail smoking cigarettes, and apparently more interested in the puffs of smoke that curled around him than in the noise and bustle that filled the air.

A. J. Smith, bushy-bearded and bespectacled, was also there, as was Brigadier General Richard Arnold, chief of artillery, and some other officers and enlisted men. The day had dawned clear and bracing, and grew to be bright and warm. As the morning hours wore away, a drowsiness born of inaction began to steal over the men at headquarters. Under the trees Banks's bodyguard had dismounted to doze in the shade. "It was a rather tedious party, and group after group formed and melted away, and re-formed and discussed the battle of the evening before, and the latest news and gossip of New Orleans, and wondered when another mail would come." [15]

At 11 A.M. Banks decided to see what, if anything, was happening at the front, and he and his staff rode off. Later he came back to his headquarters in the Childers house, on the ridge behind the lines, for lunch. The warm afternoon hours were rolling by and the enemy showed no signs of attacking. The only warlike sound was the far-off sputter of skirmish fire down the Mansfield road. There would be no battle today, Banks said, and that was the general impression. A message had been sent to Admiral Porter telling him of the events of the 8th, and now another was written informing him that the army intended to resume its advance on Shreveport that eve-

[15] Moore, ed., *Rebellion Record,* VIII, 549–50.

ning.[16] The major general commanding was nothing if not optimistic.

As darkness put an end to the fighting of April 8 Dick Taylor had a clear grasp of the strategic situation that confronted him. The Federal invasion force was divided into two columns. One, containing the bulk of the infantry and cavalry, was extended between Pleasant Hill and Emory's position at Pleasant Grove. The other column was of course on the Red River, Porter's fleet and the detachment of the 17th Corps under T. Kilby Smith. Taylor believed that his most important task was to prevent the junction of these two columns, a conclusion that was made all the stronger because of his mistaken belief that the 16th Corps was also with the fleet. The nearest point from which Banks could open communication with his river column was at Pleasant Hill. From there ran a road to Blair's Landing on the Red, sixteen miles distant. Therefore soon after the close of action on the 8th Taylor sent down part of his cavalry to occupy this road in the vicinity of Bayou Pierre Crossing.

About midnight Taylor returned to Mansfield to hasten the advance of Churchill's two divisions, which had already marched twenty-two miles that day. The Missourians and Arkansans were on the move by 2 A.M. and Taylor rode back to the scene of action an hour and a half later. He expected that the Federals would retreat during the night, but if they did not, he planned to have Churchill's men attack them at the crack of dawn. Whether Banks retreated or had to be driven, it was essential that he be pushed beyond Pleasant Hill. When this had been accomplished he would not be able to contact his river column at any point short of Grand Ecore, far to the rear. With the Northerners so widely separated it might be pos-

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 550; *Com. Con. War*, pp. 176, 218; Scott, *32d Iowa*, map facing p. 288; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 308; Part iii, 99.

sible to destroy either column in detail, and Taylor was especially hopeful of bagging the fleet, which was severely handicapped by low water.[17]

When daylight revealed the flight of the enemy, Taylor and Tom Green led the cavalry in pursuit. Everywhere were evidences of rout. The road was littered with burning ambulances and wagons, small arms, knapsacks, cooking utensils, dead, wounded, and many stragglers. The people who lived along the road, mostly women and children, stood by ruined homes and fire-blackened chimneys as the Confederates rode by. "Not even a bird was to be seen," one Southerner wrote, "nor any living thing that could get away. The wells were polluted; dead horses and broken vehicles lined the road." [18] Behind the cavalry tramped the infantry: Churchill's command, Walker's Texans, and Mouton's division, now led by Polignac. Some six miles from Pleasant Hill they encountered a large number of prisoners being sent to the rear. Zouaves from New York they were, in their exotic, bloomer-like uniforms, and the "Texicans" speculated that the war must nearly be over, since Lincoln was now reduced to sending his women to fight.[19]

After a successful brush with stragglers and a regiment of Dwight's brigade, the Southern horsemen came in sight of Pleasant Hill at nine o'clock and found Banks's army forming line of battle.[20] This was a surprise to some, and Taylor himself suspected that the enemy was making a stand merely to cover the retreat of his trains, which Taylor knew were moving back toward Grand Ecore. At all events, he sent in his

[17] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 565–66; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* 164–65; Richard Taylor to General [John G. Walker], Mansfield, 1:30 [A.M., April 9, 1864], Walker Papers. The time and date, as supplied, are made clear by the text of the letter.

[18] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 197; Blessington, *Walker's Division,* p. 193; *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 607, 617.

[19] Blessington, *Walker's Division,* p. 193.

[20] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 607.

cavalry to feel out the Northern position while waiting for the infantry to come up.[21]

At one in the afternoon the van of Churchill's column arrived at a point about two miles west of Pleasant Hill where a road to the south branched off the Mansfield road.[22] Here the command was halted. Taylor was sitting on a log near the road whittling on a stick when Churchill came up to report. In an earnest conversation, occasionally interrupted by officers coming in from the front, Taylor learned that Churchill's men were extremely weary.[23] They had marched fully forty-five miles in the last day and a half and were scarcely fit to go farther. The divisions of Walker and Polignac had been heavily engaged on the 8th and were also very jaded. It seemed the wisest course, precious though the daylight hours were, to give the infantry two hours' rest before opening the action.[24]

The Confederate leader did not have in mind any simple frontal attack on the enemy position. Taylor had followed Jackson in the Valley to some purpose, and his plan of battle was soundly conceived. The essence of it was a flank attack. Churchill was to take his two divisions and march southward to the road that led from the Sabine to Pleasant Hill. He was then to advance in a northeasterly direction and roll up the Federal left. Covering Churchill's right were to be three regiments of cavalry that, if the attack was a success, would strike for the Natchitoches road and cut off the enemy's retreat. Walker was to form line south of the Mansfield road and advance in echelon of brigades from the right when he heard the sound of Churchill's assault. At the same time he would try to

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 565; Blessington, *Walker's Division,* p. 194; Hamilton P. Bee, "Battle of Pleasant Hill—an Error Corrected," *Southern Historical Society Papers,* VIII (1880), 184–86.

[22] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 566, 605.

[23] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 197.

[24] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 566, 605; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 166. As usual in that country the troops were also suffering for want of water.

connect his right with Churchill's left. On Walker's left, in the Mansfield road, was General Bee with Debray's and Buchel's cavalry; these troopers were to charge through the town when it appeared that the attack on the right had thrown the enemy into confusion. On Bee's left were Major's and Bagby's commands, dismounted, with orders to move around by the Federal right flank and take possession of the road from Blair's Landing. Polignac's small, battered division was to be held in reserve on the Mansfield road.[25] "Orders were given to rely on the bayonet," wrote Taylor, "as we had neither time nor ammunition to waste." [26]

At three o'clock Churchill roused his men and started southward through the woods. After going two miles the Sabine road was reached, the command formed in line of battle, Parsons' division on the right and Tappan's on the left, and the advance on Pleasant Hill was begun. When three-quarters of a mile had been covered, it was found that the line did not extend far enough to the right, which would be flanked if the present line of advance was maintained. Therefore the divisions were right-faced and marched across the road until all of Parsons' division was on the south side. Then the column left-faced into line of battle and once more moved toward the enemy. Even now, however, the Federals continued to annoy Parsons' right. Their first attempts to flank the Missourians were thwarted by the right brigade and Hardeman's cavalry, but Parsons took the precaution of notifying Churchill that this force was on his right flank.[27]

Meanwhile back on the Mansfield road Taylor opened with twelve guns on a battery of the 25th New York artillery posted in front of the 24th Missouri, some 800 yards distant. This

[25] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 566–67; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 166.
[26] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 567.
[27] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 602; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 167. Probably this particular flanking force was composed of cavalry.

heavy bombardment began at 4:30—when Taylor expected Churchill to be ready to attack—and in less than half an hour the Union guns were overpowered. At five o'clock, just as the battery was being withdrawn, the roar of Churchill's attack swelled from the right. Taking his cue, Walker set his brigades in motion. Walker's advance and the retreat of the Union guns led Tom Green to think that the enemy had become demoralized, and so he ordered Bee to charge the Northern position.[28] Bee went forward in columns of fours across what had once been an old race track. When his regiments got within 200 yards of the enemy line, they were struck by a whirlwind of musketry from a flanking force of the 24th Missouri, as well as by a frontal fire from the other two right regiments of Shaw's brigade.[29] Scores of men and horses went down instantly in a writhing, tangled heap. Horses plunged and reared, some galloping off riderless, others dragging their riders by the stirrup.[30] Buchel had drawn back his regiment in time to avoid the ambush, and then he drove back the advanced Federal troops to Shaw's main line, Buchel himself falling mortally wounded in the process. Debray's regiment caught the full force of the volley and lost one-third in killed and wounded. Debray was trapped near the Union position when his horse was killed, pinning him by the right leg. The Texan finally succeeded in pulling his foot from his boot and limped toward Confederate lines, leaning on his sword. Friends came out and helped him back to where Taylor was sitting on his horse. He asked Debray if he were wounded. "No, General," the trooper answered, "I am slightly hurt; but, as you may see, I was sent on a bootless errand." "Never

[28] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 567, 608, 617; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, pp. 166–69. The other cavalry regiments were ordered to follow, but were delayed, their horses having been left in the rear.

[29] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 360, 363, 369, 608; Belisle, *Sabine Parish*, p. 248.

[30] Scott, *32d Iowa*, pp. 139, 161, 166, 169.

mind your boot," responded Taylor, "you have won your spurs."[31]

As Bee was repulsed, Walker's Texans were advancing across the open ground against the left of Shaw's brigade, their muskets at right shoulder shift. The Federals, hidden in a skirt of woods and protected by light rail breastworks, could hear the gray officers calling out commands. "Dress up on the right! Steady on the center! Steady! Steady, boys! Keep cool! Keep cool!" When the Texans neared the enemy line, they opened fire. The Iowans answered, and a deadly, desperate musketry battle began. Shaw's right was again assailed by cavalry, this time by a large dismounted force under Major.[32]

On the southern flank the first sight that Churchill's men saw when they emerged from the pine woods was a field sloping down to a dry, thicket-grown creek bottom 300 yards away. In this gully could be seen a line of blue infantry, with skirmishers thrown out. The Confederates moved swiftly down the hill, instantly put the opposing skirmish line to flight, and struck the line of Benedict's brigade with great momentum. The Southerners fought their way through the heavy growth of switch cane and fell upon the Federals with clubbed muskets. Heavily outnumbered, Benedict's brigade began to go to pieces immediately. The right regiment, 165th New York, was the first to retreat up the hill in the rear of the gully. Then the 162d New York was put to flight, then the 173d. The left regiment, Colonel Francis Fessenden's 30th Maine, was outflanked on right and left and nearly enveloped when it retreated in response to orders from Benedict, who was killed shortly afterward.[33]

[31] X. B. Debray, "A Sketch of Debray's Twenty-Sixth Regiment of Texas Cavalry," *Southern Historical Society Papers,* XIII (1885), 158–59.

[32] Scott, *32d Iowa,* pp. 140, 182–83.

[33] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 430–33; Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 198.

Leaving behind many prisoners, the Federals fell back in disorder across the fields until they reached the haven of refuge offered by the lines of the 16th Corps; there some of the survivors were rallied.[34] Churchill's victorious troops rushed on up the hill and toward the village, capturing a battery and sweeping all before them. As they pressed forward they did not see the dark masses of A. J. Smith's infantry poised dangerously on their right flank.

Benedict's defeat put Shaw's left in the air, and Scurry's brigade began to pour around the 32d Iowa. Walker himself was wounded and sent to the rear, and Taylor, seeing the stubborn resistance of the center of the enemy line, called up Polignac's division. Assailed by Walker, Polignac, and Green's dismounted cavalry, matters were becoming desperate for Shaw. He called on Dwight for help, but Dwight refused to move up, saying that he had received no orders other than to hold his position. At last, seeing that the brigade was on the verge of being surrounded, A. J. Smith sent word to Shaw to pull back. The three right brigades retreated in confusion, but before the 32d Iowa could be contacted it was cut off by Southern troops pouring through on all sides.[35]

Seeing enemy troops swarming past his rear, Dwight moved two of his regiments to the south side of the Mansfield road. Emory ordered McMillan's brigade, in reserve on the right, to march at once to the support of the routed left and charge the enemy. When McMillan attempted to carry out these orders, three of his regiments were immediately thrown into confusion by the intense fire.[36] "The air seemed all alive," one of his men

[34] Emory had requested support for Benedict's left and was told that it would be supported by Smith's troops. Stone did in fact move the 58th Illinois to the right and front some 300 yards, but even then there was a gap of over 100 yards between the right of the 58th Illinois and the left of the 30th Maine. (*Com. Con. War,* p. 218; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 392.)

[35] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 355–56, 361, 363, 366, 369, 423–24; Scott, *32d Iowa,* pp. 145–47, 183; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 169.

[36] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 392–93, 417–18, 423–24.

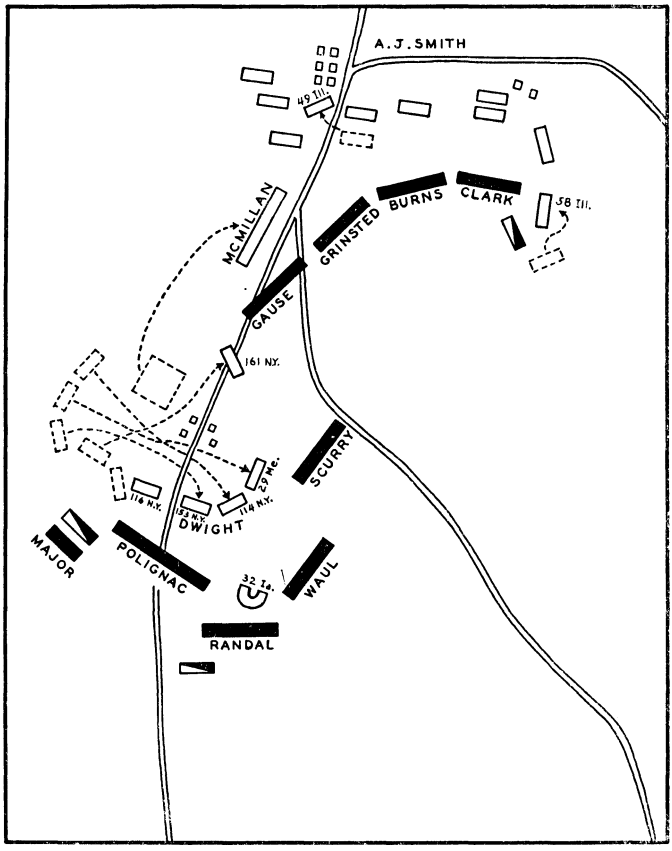


FIGURE 7. Battle of Pleasant Hill (penetration of the Union position)

wrote, "with the sounds of various projectiles; from the spiteful, cat-like spit of the buckshot, the 'pouf' of the old fashioned musket ball and the 'pee-ee-zing' of the minie bullet, to the roar of the ordinary shell and the whoot-er-whoot-er of the Whitworth 'mortar-pestle;' while the shrieks of wounded

men and horses and the yells of the apparently victorious rebels added to the uproar." [37]

The position of the Federal army, as illustrated by the sketch on the preceding page, was now most critical. The Union left center had been crushed, and the Confederates were in the village itself, where resistance had virtually ceased. At this juncture the 58th Illinois came out of its hiding place in the woods and fell upon the right of Churchill's line. The attack was taken up by the other regiments of Lynch's brigade; the Confederate flank was rolled up and forced back into the gully from which Benedict's men had been driven. Seeing this successful maneuver and recognizing the opportunity now presented, A. J. Smith ordered his line to charge. He was joined by some of Benedict's men and on his right by McMillan's brigade, which had finally succeeded in forming a line behind a board fence in Pleasant Hill.[38] Notwithstanding the suddenness of the attack, Churchill's men made a dogged and determined resistance, contesting every hillock and clump of trees and at times fighting with clubbed muskets. The fighting became especially bloody when the Southerners were pushed back to the underbrush bordering the bed of the creek, and all the relevant Union reports attest to the stern fighting required to drive the Confederates from this position.[39] The Northern counterattack is shown by the sketch on page 161.

As Parsons' division, on the right, was driven back, the right of Tappan's division was exposed, and it too was forced to retire. Tappan's left brigade, in withdrawing, ran into Scurry, the right brigade of Walker's division, and threw it into great disorder. At that time Scurry was heavily pressed by the oncoming Yankees and he lost many men in prisoners before

[37] Lufkin, *30th Maine*, p. 85.
[38] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 341–42, 345–46, 350; Shorey, *15th Maine*, p. 97.
[39] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 317, 328, 350, 373; Shorey, *15th Maine*, p. 97.

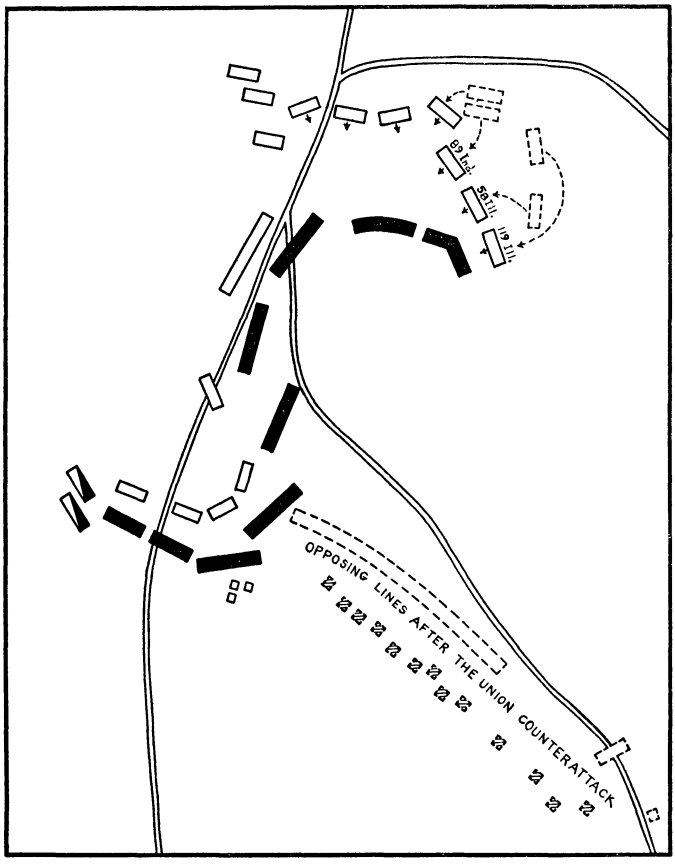


FIGURE 8. Battle of Pleasant Hill (illustrating the start of the Union counterattack and the final defeat of the Confederate right wing)

Taylor could send Randal and Waul to his rescue.[40] The Union advance now became a grand right wheel, pivoting on the village. Churchill's divisions continued to resist gallantly

[40] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 605; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, pp. 168–69.

until they were forced back into the woods. Then, with darkness falling and the enemy coming on, the withdrawal became touched with panic, and rout appeared to be imminent. Churchill, Parsons, Tappan, and the other field officers commanded, threatened, and implored in an effort to stop the rush to the rear, but without success, and soon they were forced to follow their men off the field. Darkness, difficult terrain, and heavy losses prevented the Federals from making any serious pursuit.[41] As the last Southerners disappeared from sight in the woods, Banks rode up to A. J. Smith and took his hand. "God bless you, general," he said. "You have saved the army." [42]

North of the Mansfield road Polignac and Green pressed the Union right, where they were hampered by failing light and rugged ground. The fighting here was close and hot, but the Confederates could do no more than drive the enemy within their breastworks; that part of the position was virtually impregnable.[43] As night came on, fighting all along the line dwindled and died, and both armies began the dreary business of collecting stragglers and trying to help the wounded.

For the second time in two days Banks was faced with the same problem: having repulsed the enemy, what should the next move be? As on the night of the 8th, Banks's inclination was to resume the march against Shreveport. Shortly after the fighting ended, he told A. J. Smith that he intended to advance in the morning, and an order was sent to General Lee to reverse the trains and come back to Pleasant Hill.[44] But soon thereafter Banks conferred with Franklin, Emory, and Dwight and found that they all opposed resuming the offensive. Frank-

[41] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 199; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 317–18, 603, 605.

[42] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 309. This is Smith's version of the incident; there are others using slightly different phraseology.

[43] Bee, "Battle of Pleasant Hill," *Sou. Hist. Soc. Pap.,* p. 185; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 617–18.

[44] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 13, 62, 195–96.

lin and Emory advised marching to Blair's Landing, where the army could be supplied and reinforced under the guns of the fleet.[45] Franklin had no stomach for another pitched battle under Banks's generalship. "From what I had seen of General Banks' ability to command in the field," he said, "I was certain that an operation depending on plenty of troops, rather than upon skill in handling them, was the only one which would have probability of success in his hands. . . ." [46]

Dwight advised retreating to Grand Ecore rather than Blair's Landing, and that was what Banks decided to do. There was much to be said for this decision. From the army's point of view, it was the safest thing to do. If it had been decided to march over to Blair's, there was no assurance either that the enemy would allow them to cross Bayou Pierre, or that the fleet carrying the needed supplies had not already been captured or destroyed by Taylor's men.[47]

Evidently A. J. Smith did not attend the council of war, and it was midnight when he received the order to retreat. It was a total surprise to him; the last thing he had heard, Banks was going to advance, not retreat. He went immediately to the commanding general to protest. His dead were not buried, he said, and many of his wounded had not even been gathered in from the field. Moreover, a retreat would leave the enemy free to fall upon T. Kilby Smith and the fleet with overwhelming numbers. At the very least, Smith urged, he should be allowed to stay at Pleasant Hill until noon the next day and see to it that those of the wounded who could not be carried away were brought in to hospitals and left as adequately provided for as circumstances permitted. Banks refused, giving as his reasons for ordering an immediate withdrawal the almost complete lack of water and supplies, the heavy losses suffered, and

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 221–22.
[46] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[47] See *ibid.*, p. 189, for Dwight's reasons for retreating.

the advice of his other general officers. Then, said Smith, let me remain until only nine in the morning. Banks again refused.

In a desperate mood Smith left Banks and sought out Franklin, the second in command, and proposed that he put Banks under arrest and take command of the army. Smith assured him that such an action would be supported by the men of the 13th, 16th, and 17th Corps. Franklin took a cup of coffee as the angry soldier before him rasped out his dangerous proposition. He stirred it slowly for a few moments. Finally he said, "Smith, don't you know this is mutiny?" There the matter was dropped.[48]

A fresh battlefield was always a frightful and sickening place, but the one at Pleasant Hill seems to have impressed the soldiers as one of particular horror. "The air was filled," said one, "with groans and shrieks, and delirious yells." [49] As the night turned cold there came calls from the wounded for fire, and repeated wails such as "Oh, I am freezing," and of course the ever-present cry, "For God's sake bring us some water." Men in agony called to their comrades for help. "Send someone to get me," they would say. "Where is the Twenty-Fourth Iowa?" "Fourth Texas, come here." "My God, I am dying. . . ." [50] This was worse than the fighting itself.[51]

During the evening and early morning hours, before the scheduled retreat of the army, the wounded were sought out and brought to houses in the village that had been converted into field hospitals. They could not be taken with the army because there was no transportation available—all the wagons

[48] Scott, *32d Iowa,* pp. 230–35; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 309; see also Hoffman, *Camp, Court and Siege,* pp. 96–97, and Homans, *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.,* VIII, 86–87.

[49] Beecher, *114th New York,* p. 324.

[50] Pellet, *114th New York,* p. 211; see also Scott, *32d Iowa,* pp. 141–42; Clark *116th New York,* p. 163; Shorey *15th Maine,* pp. 98–99; J. T. Woods, *Services of the Ninety-Sixth Ohio Volunteers* (Toledo, 1874) pp. 70–71.

[51] Pellet, *114th New York,* p. 213.

were miles away on the road to Grand Ecore. To make matters worse, it was discovered that the wagons containing the army's medical supplies had been sent off with the rest of the train.[52] In all, some 300 or 400 wounded were left to the care of the Confederates. The latter did what they could for them, but the ration of water, beef, and corn meal seemed very poor fare indeed to men who had been living off the fat of the land.[53] Federal surgeons and hospital personnel who remained with their patients were well treated and soon released as noncombatants. These men, said a Union doctor, "never tired of telling of the kind and considerate treatment they received at the hands of Confederate surgeons. . . ." [54] Several days later the Federals were to send some wagons through the lines loaded with "good things" for the sick and wounded, having the assurance of the Southerners that they would be used for that purpose only, a promise that was faithfully kept.[55] This could do but little, however, to ease the bitterness of the men in the ranks, to say nothing of the unsentimental A. J. Smith, who shed tears over it, at abandoning the wounded after having apparently defeated the enemy. But Banks had spoken, and in the gloom of the early hours after midnight the men formed ranks, filed off the field, and started down the forest road to Grand Ecore.[56]

Tactically, the battle of Pleasant Hill was distinctly a Northern victory, although the retreat to Grand Ecore turned it into

[52] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 175–76.

[53] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 152; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 170; Stewart Diary, p. 12.

[54] Charles B. Johnson, *Muskets and Medicine or Army Life in the Sixties* (Philadelphia, 1917), p. 177.

[55] Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry,* p. 162.

[56] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 331, 428, 431; Shorey, *15th Maine,* p. 101; Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 142; Lufkin, *13th Maine,* p. 87; *Com. Con. War,* p. 219; Homans, *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.,* VIII, 86; Bee, "Battle of Pleasant Hill," *Sou. Hist. Soc. Pap.,* p. 185; Porter to Sherman, April 16, 1864, *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 58. According to Admiral Porter, Smith "cried like a child at having to leave his poor fellows on the field."

a strategic defeat. In this sense it resembles Sharpsburg, with the fortunes of war reversed. There Lee successfully repelled McClellan's attack, but two days later withdrew across the Potomac into Virginia. The analogy is not an exact one, but the general character of the results that ensued bears comparison. In each case an invasion was repelled.

A glance at a map showing Federal troop dispositions as they were at the beginning of the action makes the Union success seem all the more remarkable. A worse placement of troops for defensive operations could scarcely be envisioned. In this respect it rivaled the condition of Grant's army at Shiloh at the moment of Albert Sidney Johnston's attack. In the center of the line, if such a conglomeration of units can be said to have a center, there was a gap approaching one-half mile in width between the brigades of Benedict and Shaw. Not quite as far in the rear of this gap, faced in the opposite direction, stood the brigade of McMillan. This unit was being held as a reserve behind the extreme right flank, by far the strongest part of the position, which was already held by Dwight's brigade. The wholly obvious move was to fill the space between Benedict and Shaw with McMillan's brigade, but this was not done. Another, though smaller, hole in the line was that separating Shaw's right (24th Missouri) and Dwight's left (116th New York). The latter was in such a position that it lent no support whatever to the former. In fact, the 116th New York could not be assailed until Shaw's left had either been turned or had given way completely.

What was essentially the front line of Banks's position was held by two brigades only, Benedict's and Shaw's. Both of these commands were overwhelmed early in the contest: Benedict lost 29 killed, 141 wounded, and 284 missing, a total of 454; and Shaw 67 killed, 326 wounded, and 90 missing, a total of 483.[57] Thus out of a total loss in the entire army of

[57] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 313, 432; sixty of the missing came from the 32d Iowa.

1369,[58] 937 came from these two brigades, simply as a result of inexcusably poor deployment. On the left of the line A. J. Smith's regiments held the highest ridge in the Federal position, but what should have been a strong line was rendered weak by the dangerous manner in which Smith's left flank was thrust forward. As it turned out, this weakness was not exploited by the Confederates, but it was a most serious defect nevertheless.

It is almost impossible to fix responsibility for the Federals' deployment on any individuals. Stone, Smith, Franklin, and Emory probably all were more or less at fault. Banks of course must bear the lion's share of the blame, for he had at least seven hours on April 9 to make his dispositions. In fact, the great handicap under which the army labored was its lack of a commanding general. Banks was there on the field, but so far as the records show, he did not effectively exercise command; it seems that he did practically nothing to direct the fighting. The crucial decision leading to the repulse of the Confederates was made by A. J. Smith without orders from Banks.[59]

With all this bungling, how was it that the Federals won the engagement? The answer lies in the faulty execution of Taylor's plan of battle. The essence of this plan was to roll up the enemy left, sending his troops into action successively from right to left, in effect *en echelon* from the right. Churchill's command was selected as the flanking force. The plan failed because Churchill did not form his line of battle far enough to the south, with the result that instead of rolling up the Union flank, he crossed his right in front of the enemy's left and was himself rolled up. Had he moved beyond the left of Banks's line before attacking, a serious defeat might well have been inflicted on the Federals. Franklin himself knew this. "The position at Pleasant Hill was weak," he said, "and had

[58] Livermore, *Numbers and Losses,* p. 109; 150 killed, 844 wounded, 375 missing.
[59] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 307, 350, 354–55, 423, 430.

the enemy attacked us in rear as well as in front we would probably have had a disaster." [60] Churchill realized the chance he had missed, and he said in his report that if his line had "extended a half mile more to the right, a brilliant success would have been achieved." [61] In his memoirs Taylor took the blame for this mistake on his own shoulders. "Instead of intrusting the important attack by my right to a subordinate, I should have conducted it myself and taken Polignac's division to sustain it. . . . All this flashed upon me the instant I learned of the disorder of my right. Herein lies the vast difference between genius and commonplace: one anticipates errors, the other discovers them too late." [62] The immediate fault was Churchill's, however. He thought he had gone beyond the Union left, and he was wrong. Easy as it was to make such a mistake in a wooded, unfamiliar country, the responsibility still was his. "A worthy, gallant gentleman, General Churchill," said Taylor, "but not fortunate in war." [63]

The numbers engaged at Pleasant Hill were very nearly equal. Of infantry and artillery the Federal forces had 11,193 effectives, plus the detachment of 1000 troopers from Lee's cavalry: total, 12,193.[64] This force suffered 1369 casualties.[65]

[60] *Com. Con. War,* p. 35.

[61] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 167.

[62] *Ibid.,* p. 171.

[63] *Ibid.,* p. 170.

[64] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 168, 263, 322, 375, 459. Three regiments of Smith's command (117th Illinois, 5th Minnesota, 8th Wisconsin) were not engaged. On the basis of the average regimental strength in each division of the 16th Corps, a deduction of 1320 was therefore made from the present for duty strength of the 16th Corps. To arrive at the effective infantry and artillery strength, the present for duty strength (12,036) was multiplied by .93, according to Livermore's system. Livermore, *Numbers and Losses,* p. 109, gave 12,647 as the total effectives engaged, but he fails to make any deduction for the 117th Illinois. He was further mistaken in saying that no colored troops were engaged; one company was a part of the skirmish line in front of Benedict's position. (*O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 430.) They have not been included in the figures here, however, since it seems likely that the full 1000 of the cavalry detachment did not see action (cf. *Com. Con. War,* p. 35), and it is thought that the two figures should roughly offset each other.

[65] See above, pp. 166–67.

The cavalry was only lightly engaged, and suffered 28 casualties.[66] Lee's men, in fact, had become something of a laughingstock since the debacle at Sabine Crossroads.[67] As already pointed out, the heaviest losses fell upon the brigades of Shaw and Benedict.[68]

Taylor had on the field 12,500 effectives, all of whom were very tired from the marching and fighting of the last day and a half. By comparison, Banks's troops were fresh. Confederate killed and wounded came to 1200, and prisoners lost amounted to 426: a total of 1626. Three field pieces were lost when Churchill's command gave way.[69]

[66] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 452.

[67] Pellet, *114th New York,* pp. 215–16; Clark, *116th New York,* p. 166.

[68] For a more detailed breakdown of casualties, see *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 260, 313, 398, 418, 426, 431, 452; Clark, *116th New York,* p. 163; Beecher, *114th New York,* p. 325.

[69] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 167, 171. In his report (*O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 309) A. J. Smith claimed "nearly 1000" prisoners at Pleasant Hill. This is clearly an error. In his report (*ibid.,* p. 184), Banks claimed only 500. General Stone (Stone to Ransom, April 9, 1864, *ibid.,* Part iii, 100) claimed 400 to 500. Of the 426 Confederates captured, 179 came from Churchill's command, and the remaining 247 from Scurry's brigade (Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 171; Blessington, *Walker's Division,* pp. 199–200). According to Taylor, his total loss for both April 8 and 9 came to 2626 killed, wounded, and missing. He stated in his memoirs (p. 171) that on these two days his forces captured 2800 prisoners, not including stragglers picked up after the battle of the 9th.

CHAPTER VI

*

The Federals Go Hungry in Arkansas

*

ONE ARM OF THE Federal pincers movement on Shreveport was broken when Banks's army began its retreat from Pleasant Hill. The other, Steele's army, was still advancing on the Confederate stronghold from the northeast, and by the time Taylor attacked at Pleasant Hill the campaign in Arkansas was over two weeks old. Events in that quarter now require examination.

From the first, Steele was reluctant to attempt any campaign through central Arkansas. At that time of year the roads were sloughs, the country was swept bare as a desert of all food and forage, and guerillas were active and numerous on a scale unknown east of the Mississippi. But a direct order from Grant left him no alternative, and Steele began to shape his plans for the impending offensive.[1] He was at first inclined to the Red River along the line of the Ouachita, via Monroe, Louisiana, but he finally decided to march on Shreveport by way of Arkadelphia and Washington.[2] On March 17 he ordered Brigadier

[1] See above, p. 85.

[2] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 154–57. For the location of these towns see the sketch on page 174.

General John M. Thayer, commanding at Fort Smith, to set out with his troops and join the main column at Arkadelphia on April 1, a march of about 170 miles.[3] Colonel Powell Clayton, commander of a small garrison at Pine Bluff, was to keep a close watch on the enemy in his front and reconnoiter as close to Camden as possible. From Little Rock, Steele would lead the Third Division, 7th Corps, and two brigades of cavalry, a total of about 6800 effectives.[4] Thayer would bring another 3600 effectives, making a grand total, excluding Clayton's force, of 10,400 effectives.[5]

Thayer broke camp on March 21 and Steele on the 23d, two days later than originally planned. It was a clear, beautiful day at Little Rock, and Steele's men, loaded with full equipment and forty rounds of ammunition, struck out on the Benton road to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." The troops were a little soft from garrison duty and only a short warm-up march of nine miles was made that day. "Next morning," a soldier of the 33d Iowa wrote,

> our bugle startled the surrounding darkness, and soon the call was answered from all the neighboring fields. Bugles rang as we had never heard them before. If an enemy had been in hearing distance, he must have thought we were at least a hundred thousand men, to raise such a wide-spread din. Finally a brass band, that accompanied the expedition, rang out its mellow tones, and the noise of the bugles ceased. The Camden Expedition started out "in style."[6]

The style was somewhat toned down that evening when it was announced that, with the exception of coffee, only half-rations

[3] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part ii, 638, 707.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 704.

[5] *Ibid.*, Part i, p. 657. The number may have been larger. Brigadier General Frederick Saloman, commanding the Third Division, reported after the campaign that he had carried 5226 effectives from Little Rock (*ibid.*, p. 692), although the Mar. 31 return, used here in calculating effectives, showed only 4850 present for duty.

[6] A. F. Sperry, *History of the 33d Iowa Infantry Volunteer Regiment* (Des Moines, 1886), p. 61.

would be issued during the march.[7] On the 26th the column reached the town of Rockport on the Ouachita, at this point a clear, sparkling stream running over a gravelly bed, with easy fords nearby. The town itself, on high and gently rolling ground, was found to be almost entirely deserted.[8] A bridge was quickly thrown up as a precaution against a rise in the river, and on this the infantry and artillery crossed, the cavalry and the trains using the fords. As the column pushed on to within a few miles of Arkadelphia, a striking change seemed to transform the countryside; grass, trees, and bushes all suddenly appeared to be greener and more luxuriant. The town entered on the 29th, was an attractive village of white frame houses. Tired of half-rations, the men broke ranks and scattered in search of food, paying for "almost all" they got. At that some of the women told them that "yur men treat us better than our own men do." [9] All of Steele's soldiers were not so considerate, however, and some of them wrecked the local young ladies' seminary, tearing up the maps and papers, breaking the benches, and even smashing the piano, doubtless the institution's prized ornament.[10]

While Steele was marching, Confederate defenders of Arkansas were preparing as adequate a reception for the invaders as their limited resources allowed. The commander of the District of Arkansas, Major General Sterling Price, had at his disposal five brigades of cavalry, of which two were east of the Saline near Monticello and Mount Elba. Brigadier General John S. Marmaduke commanded the other three. The brigades of Brigadier General Joseph O. Shelby and Colonel Colton Greene were with Marmaduke at Camden. The Fifth, Brigadier Gen-

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 61.
[8] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 673.
[9] Sperry, *33d Iowa*, pp. 62–65.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

eral W. L. Cabell commanding, was on the Red River sixteen miles west of Washington. The three together only amounted to 3200 effectives, but they were composed of hard-fighting troopers.[11]

When the news of Steele's advance arrived, Cabell was ordered to march for Tate's Bluff, at the confluence of the Ouachita and Little Missouri Rivers. On March 25 Shelby set out from Camden for Princeton. Three days later, in response to Price's order, Marmaduke took Greene's brigade and started for Tate's Bluff. The plan of action called for Cabell and Greene to harass the head of the enemy column while Shelby fell on its flanks and rear. When Marmaduke reached Tate's Bluff he learned that the Federals had passed Rockport and were advancing on Arkadelphia. Consequently, he ordered Shelby to cross the Ouachita and attack the rear of the Federal army. Since it appeared that Steele intended to move directly on Washington, Cabell was diverted to Antoine. All these movements, as well as subsequent ones, are shown on the sketch on the next page. It was now Marmaduke's intention to harry the enemy column until it reached the Little Missouri, where he would seriously contest the crossing.[12]

At Arkadelphia Steele's campaign struck its first snag: there was no news of Thayer. Three days were spent at the rendezvous waiting for some sign that the column from Fort Smith was approaching, but no word came into headquarters. Since he could not sit down and wait indefinitely, all the while consuming precious supplies that could not be replaced without great difficulty, if at all, Steele set out from Arkadelphia on April 1, taking the old military road to Washington.[13] Before dark the Federals had several severe skirmishes with Cabell,

[11] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 821. Cabell's brigade was ordinarily a part of Brigadier James F. Fagan's division.

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] *Ibid.,* pp. 673, 679; Part iii, 77–78; Sperry, *33d Iowa,* p. 66.

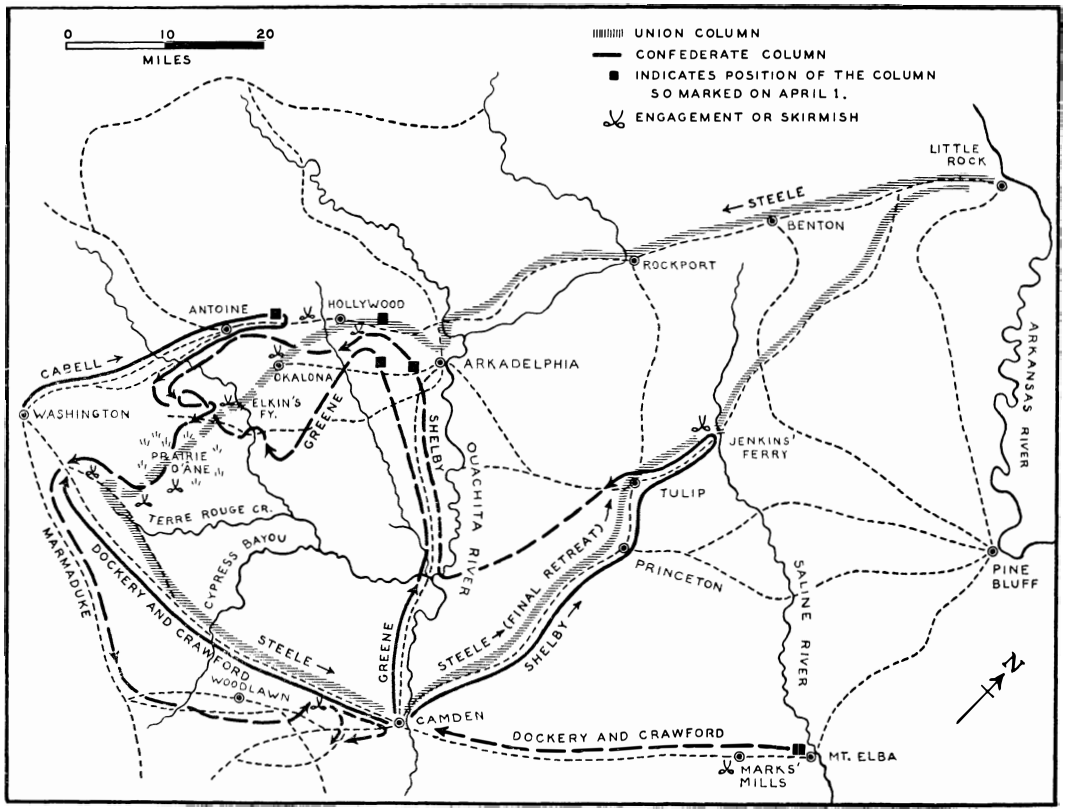


FIGURE 9. The campaign in Arkansas (Union and Confederate lines of march during the Camden Expedition, March 23 to May 3, 1864)

and that night Steele's army camped in the vicinity of a hamlet called Hollywood.[14] That same night (April 1) Marmaduke ordered Greene, then a few miles east of Hollywood, to take all but one regiment and move to Cottingham's Store, about three miles south of the Little Missouri on the Washington road. The next day Cabell's brigade was withdrawn to the same point, one regiment being left near Antoine as a rear guard. Falling back slowly, and repulsing the Northerners sharply at Wolf Creek, this regiment later joined the rest of the brigade south of the Little Missouri. Early in the afternoon it was discovered that the Federals had turned off the Washington road and were marching to Elkin's Ferry by way of Okalona. Toward evening Greene joined Cabell at Cottingham's Store. By that time Steele had seized Elkin's Ferry with a strong force and had posted artillery to sweep the approaches. North of the river Shelby's brigade harassed the enemy's rear guard near Terre Noire Creek, making three charges on artillery in what Steele described as the most gallant style.[15]

On the 3d Shelby pushed another vigorous attack on the Federals, who were now closing up to the Little Missouri, having already crossed part of their forces to the south side. On the next day Steele began to cross the main body of his army. To meet this move and to relieve pressure on Shelby north of the river, Marmaduke decided to attack. Deploying his troops on a ridge overlooking the river bottom, Marmaduke assaulted the enemy with about 1200 troopers, drove them a considerable distance, and then withdrew when he came upon heavy masses of troops. Losses on both sides were light.[16] That evening Shelby joined the other two brigades, and the next morning Marmaduke withdrew southward to the Camden-Washington road,

[14] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 821–22; Sperry, *33d Iowa,* p. 66. The town was also known as Spoonville or Witherspoonville.

[15] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 660, 693, 822; Part iii, 77–78; Sperry *33d Iowa,* p. 67.

[16] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 660, 823; Sperry, *33d Iowa,* p. 67.

about sixteen miles from Elkin's Ferry. Here, along the southwestern side of the Prairie d'Ane there was a weak line of earthworks, which Marmaduke hoped would make Steele less anxious to advance. Meanwhile a continual skirmishing was kept up.

On April 6 reinforcements arrived in the form of Brigadier General Richard M. Gano's brigade of Texas cavalry, a part of Maxey's division from the Indian Territory. In the opposing camp, news had just come in of Thayer's column, which was then on the march from Hot Springs. Steele decided to wait for these troops a short distance south of the Little Missouri. Working parties were sent back to prepare the road for the passage of Thayer's train, a task immensely complicated by the rain that began to fall in the evening. The bottom land was flooded, the corduroying and bridges afloat.[17] The damage was laboriously repaired and a pontoon bridge laid, and by April 9 the Frontier Division was at last across the river. Steele's men were not much impressed by the newcomers. "While we lay here," Sperry recorded, "the long-looked-for and much-talked-of re-inforcement of 'Thayer's command' arrived, from Fort Smith. A nondescript style of re-inforcement it was too, numbering almost every kind of soldiers, including Indians, and accompanied by multitudinous vehicles, of all descriptions, which had been picked up along the road." [18] They arrived, moreover, destitute of supplies, and the delay they had caused the rest of the army had resulted inevitably in the consumption of rations sufficient to have lasted to Shreveport, had the march been more rapid. Therefore Steele was forced to send back word to Little Rock to dispatch a supply train with thirty days' half-rations for 15,000 men.[19]

17 *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 660, 675, 780, 824–25; Part iii, 77–78.
18 Sperry, *33d Iowa*, p. 68.
19 *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part iii, 77–79.

On the 7th there arrived at the Confederate camp the district commander, General Price, nicknamed "Old Pap" by his men. Tall, handsome, with flowing white hair, Price had every attribute of the ideal soldier and leader of men, including a relentless ambition. Although without professional military training, he had served as a brigadier in the Mexican War. Later he became governor of Missouri, where he continued to be very popular. His career since 1861 had been rather erratic, and Kirby Smith evidently had some misgivings, soon confirmed, as to Price's military ability.[20] So far his conduct in this campaign had been undistinguished. Of five brigades at his disposal, only three had been used to any effect, and it appears that their movements had been directed almost entirely by Marmaduke. The other two, Crawford's and Dockery's of Fagan's division, were left east of the Ouachita guarding the line of the Saline when it should have been obvious that there was to be no serious Federal advance from Pine Bluff. To make matters worse, Dockery's men were surprised and routed at Mount Elba on March 30 by a small expedition from Pine Bluff under Clayton Powell, who immediately retraced his steps after defeating the Confederates. Now when Price joined Marmaduke with the brigades of Crawford and Dockery it was too late to contest the crossing of the Little Missouri with the full strength of his district, and the best opportunity for stopping Steele was gone.[21]

On April 10 Steele moved forward in force across the beautiful Prairie d'Ane, driving the stubbornly resisting troops of Shelby and Dockery southward. By late afternoon a continuous skirmishing had merged into a respectable battle, with a severe artillery duel. Captain Richard A. Collins' Missouri battery,

[20] *Ibid.*, Part i, pp. 476, 478; Lucy Simmons, "The Life of Sterling Price" (unpub. M. A. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1922), pp. 93, 106, 108, 110, and *passim*.

[21] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 660, 779–80, 768–71.

whose mascot was a tame bear named Postlewait, was outgunned and badly cut up, but held its ground nevertheless.[22] As darkness began to fall, Brigadier General Frederick Saloman, whose division was leading the Union attack, halted his men on rising ground. The night was clear and cold, and during the hours of darkness the Confederates kept up a sporadic artillery fire. The picket lines were close enough for the usual insults to be exchanged, and across the prairie the Federals could see the sparks of the slow matches the Southerners were using to discharge their guns. Toward midnight some of Price's men made a fierce sortie against a Federal battery, but they were repulsed.

The following morning passed quietly. Finally in the middle of the afternoon a large part of the Union army began to advance across the gently undulating prairie in line of battle. But by then it was too late, or so it seemed, to bring on a general engagement, and the Federals soon returned to their camps of the previous night.[23] That evening Price fell back with most of his troops to a point eight miles east of Washington, abandoning the line of breastworks along the southwestern edge of the prairie.

On the morning of the 12th the Federals moved forward in line of battle with their "habitual caution," as Price put it. They soon occupied the entrenchments, vacated by Southern skirmishers only a short time before.[24] Then came a surprise. Making a feint with his cavalry as if he intended to advance on Washington, Steele reversed his column and began to march in the opposite direction, due east toward Camden. That night the van camped at Terre Rouge Creek.[25] This new movement was dictated by Steele's need for supplies; until provisions could be

[22] John N. Edwards, *Shelby and His Men: or, The War in the West* (Cincinnati, 1867), pp. 254–55, 264–65.

[23] Sperry, *33d Iowa,* pp. 68–72; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 675, 687, 780, 824, 838.

[24] Sperry, *33d Iowa,* p. 72; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 687, 780, 824–25.

[25] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 675.

sent out from Little Rock and Pine Bluff, farther southward penetration had to be postponed, and Steele now intended to make Camden his advanced supply base. The situation of the Federals was really anything but enviable. "Our supplies were nearly exhausted," Steele wrote Halleck a few days later, "and so was the country. We were obliged to forage from 5 to 15 miles on either side of the road to keep our stock alive." [26] The men in the ranks, on half-rations for nearly three weeks, ignored their commander's strict orders against unauthorized foraging.[27]

On the next day, April 13, Maxey joined Price with the rest of his division, consisting of Colonel Tandy Walker's Second Indian (Choctaw) Brigade.[28] Price then moved forward with Maxey's and Fagan's divisions, five brigades in all, and fell upon the Union rearguard, Thayer's Frontier Division. In the lead was Dockery, who captured a section of artillery, but was forced to give it up when he was driven back by superior numbers.

Steele's men continued to tramp toward Camden. Many parts of the road seemed bottomless, especially in the valleys of Terre Rouge Creek and Cypress Bayou, and many long stretches had to be corduroyed before they were passable.[29] The crossing of the latter stream meant simply wading through a swamp. The men of the 33d Iowa were somewhat repaid for their discomfort when the rawboned horse ridden by Major Gibson, their commander, stumbled and sent Gibson "sliding over his head, with all due and perpendicular gravity, plump into the mud and mire." [30]

Once past Cypress Bayou the road into Camden was comparatively good. On the afternoon of the 14th reports came into Federal headquarters that the Confederates were throwing a

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 661.
[27] Sperry, *33d Iowa*, pp. 72–73.
[28] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 780.
[29] *Ibid.*, pp. 675, 687.
[30] Sperry, *33d Iowa*, pp. 73–74.

force between Steele and Camden in an attempt to hem him in front and rear. The leading infantry brigade, under Brigadier General Samuel A. Rice, was ordered to push on toward Camden as rapidly as possible. At 8 P.M., after an extremely exhausting forced march, Rice reached White Oak Creek, eighteen miles from Camden, and joined Brigadier General Eugene A. Carr's cavalry. After a cold and uncomfortable night, Steele's men resumed the march at dawn. Before many miles were covered they ran into determined resistance. Across the road was Marmaduke's division, which had left the vicinity of Washington on the morning of the 13th, made a sixty-mile detour around the southern flank of the Union army, and struck the Camden-Washington road some fourteen miles from the former place. As it turned out, the Confederates had their labor for their pains, for they were not strong enough to stop the enemy. In a stiff two-hour engagement Marmaduke was forced aside. Sending a detachment to burn whatever public property remained in Camden, he withdrew his command to a position eight miles southwest of the town. Price arrived soon after with the rest of his troops and established his headquarters at Woodlawn, distributing his forces so as to cover all the approaches to Camden west of the Ouachita. Not long before dark the leading Union infantry brigade entered Camden.[31]

It was four o'clock on the morning of April 9 when Kirby Smith received Taylor's dispatch announcing the victory at Mansfield. He rode sixty-five miles that day, but he was unable to reach the vicinity of Pleasant Hill until late that night, after the battle there was over. Rousing Taylor from his much-needed sleep, Smith joined him and General Bee around the latter's campfire, and the three discussed the day's events over cups of

[31] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 675, 687–88, 695, 781, 825, 838–39.

coffee.[32] Smith learned that Debray's regiment, under Bee's direction, was picketing up to the Union lines, but that all the infantry and some of the cavalry had been sent back to Carroll's Mill on Ten Mile Bayou, the nearest place where food and water could be obtained. Most of the cavalry was forced to go all the way back to Mansfield for forage.[33]

The following morning Smith and Taylor themselves returned to Mansfield. For the moment, at least, better personal relations had been established between the two. Smith assured Taylor of his friendship and told him that he had supported him in the field with all the resources of the department. On his part, Taylor made a quasi-apology for his irritable disposition and asked Kirby Smith to bear with him. But this friendly atmosphere could not long survive disagreements over military policy. Taylor soon discovered that his commander disapproved of any further pursuit of Banks. For one thing, he was apprehensive lest the Federal river column reach Shreveport, or else interpose between that place and Taylor's command. Moreover, the southward progress of Steele's column made him unwilling to increase the distance of Taylor's army from Shreveport. All these fears Taylor believed to be groundless, and he pointed out that both Steele and Porter would inevitably retreat as soon as they received news of Banks's withdrawal to Grand Ecore. He was entirely convinced that if all the Confederate forces in Louisiana were concentrated against Banks, both the Federal army and Porter's fleet would be captured or destroyed.[34] As usual, Taylor failed to persuade Smith, and he was directed to

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 480, 568; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 176; Bee, "Battle of Pleasant Hill," *Sou. Hist. Soc. Pap.,* p. 185.

[33] Bee, "Battle of Pleasant Hill," *Sou. Hist. Soc. Pap.,* p. 185.

[34] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 545–46; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 176. Taylor implies that this conversation took place on the night of the 9th at Pleasant Hill, but collateral evidence indicates that it probably occurred at Mansfield on the 10th.

move the infantry to Mansfield. Smith returned to Shreveport on the 11th. Taylor, however, was not even remotely reconciled to allowing Banks to escape relatively unhindered, and he again reiterated his convictions in a letter to departmental headquarters. This brought Kirby Smith back to Mansfield on the 13th.[35] Finding that he still could not shake his superior's intentions to march against Steele rather than Banks, Taylor then expressed his "willingness to march to General Price with the main body of [the] infantry and serve under his command until Steele's column was destroyed or driven back." However, it was Taylor's understanding that as soon as it was learned that Steele had commenced to retreat (as Taylor thought he soon must), the northward movement of the Confederate infantry would stop, and he would be allowed to march against Banks once again.[36]

As a result of this understanding the divisions of Walker, Churchill (Tappan), and Parsons were started on the road to Shreveport on the morning of April 14. Polignac's small division—2000 effectives at the most—and the cavalry were ordered down to Natchitoches to harry Banks as much as their numbers would permit. On the evening of the 15th Taylor reached Shreveport, where an unpleasant surprise was waiting for him. In an interview with Kirby Smith he learned that Steele had stopped his southward advance about 110 miles from Shreveport and was now moving eastward toward Camden. Smith said that he hoped to overtake the Federals, whom he evidently thought were in full retreat, and that he intended to conduct the pursuit in person.[37] "I was further informed," wrote Taylor after the war, "that my presence with the troops was not desired, and that I would remain in nominal command of Shreveport, but join the force near Grand Ecore if I thought proper.

[35] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 480, 546.
[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 571–72 (Taylor's report, April 18).
[37] *Ibid.*, p. 570.

All this with a curt manner of a superior to a subordinate, as if fearing remonstrance." [38] He then proceeded to tell the smoldering Taylor that should news come of Steele's retreat across the Ouachita, the infantry column would be turned at Minden and sent to Campti, on the Red, to operate againt Banks.[39]

Leaving Taylor to cool his heels, Kirby Smith set out for Camden the next day with the infantry. His great concern now was that Steele might be able to establish contact with Banks, although just how he expected this to be accomplished does not appear. By road, Steele at Camden must have been at least 150 miles from Banks at Grand Ecore; by river, leaving aside navigational difficulties and the lack of steamboats, it was probably twice as far. At any rate, to guard against the possibility of Steele moving toward Banks, Walker's division was marched through Minden, where the band played "Dixie" and the young ladies turned out to cheer the Texans, and out to Walnut Creek. Here, about sixty miles northeast of Shreveport, the division encamped.[40] On the 17th Kirby Smith established his headquarters at Calhoun, Arkansas, which was connected telegraphically with Shreveport and was within a few hours of Price by courier. It was now his chief hope that by keeping Steele in ignorance of Banks's difficulties as long as possible he might have time to disrupt Steele's lines of supply, force him to retreat, and then overtake the starving enemy and destroy his army. This would swing open the door to Little Rock, northern Arkansas, and perhaps Missouri.[41] Such, at least, were his plans.

Smith left Shreveport on April 16, and on the same day the rear of the Federal column marched into Camden. The heavily fortified town looked most inviting to the weary soldiers, and

[38] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 180.

[39] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 481.

[40] *Ibid.;* Blessington, *Walker's Division,* pp. 243–44. The other divisions continued to march toward Camden.

[41] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 486–87, 534; Part iii, 766.

after camp was made they foraged for hams, cornbread, and other edibles. The local people were sometimes hesitant about taking greenbacks, never having seen any before. "But small was the difference to us," said one hungry Yankee, "whether they took them or not, if only we got what eatables we wanted."[42] The food problem was eased somewhat by the capture thirty miles below the town of the Confederate steamer *Homer,* loaded with 4000 to 5000 bushels of corn. A small supply of meat was collected from the country east of the Ouachita.[43]

Then the Unionists suffered a severe setback in their search for provisions. On April 17 a train of 198 wagons was sent out on the Washington road to collect corn and what other food could be found. It was escorted by 500 men of the 1st Kansas (Colored), 200 cavalry, and two guns. When the expedition reached a point eighteen miles west of Camden the wagons were dispersed over the countryside to look for food. Toward midnight they returned to camp loaded with corn. At sunup the next morning the train and escort began the return trip to Camden. Before they had gone more than four miles they met reinforcements: 375 men of the 18th Iowa, 90 troopers, and two mountain howitzers. The column's commander, Colonel James M. Williams, 1st Kansas, now had fully 1000 effectives and four guns with which to guard the train.[44]

In the meantime the progress of this force had not gone unnoticed by the Confederates. On the 17th, Marmaduke borrowed about 1500 men from General Fagan and, with 500 of his own, marched at sunset to attack the Federals. Before he had gone very far Marmaduke heard that the enemy expedition had been substantially reinforced from Camden. Believing he now faced 2500 men, Marmaduke returned to camp and wrote

[42] Sperry, *33d Iowa,* pp. 78–79; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 770.
[43] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 661, 668.
[44] *Ibid.,* pp. 743–44.

to Price advising a concentration of all available troops to cut the enemy off from Camden. Then at sunrise the next morning he led his regiments north to the Washington-Camden road. The enemy was encountered about fourteen miles from the latter town at a place with the suggestive name of Poison Spring. As Marmaduke was getting his men in position across the road, reinforcements sent by Price arrived: Maxey's division and, later, Wood's 14th Missouri Battalion. The entire Southern detachment now numbered some 3100 effectives, giving odds of three to one over the enemy.[45]

Although Maxey was the senior officer present, he left to Marmaduke the tactical direction of the action, feeling that he was more familiar with the situation. Marmaduke's plan of battle called for Maxey's division to attack the Union right while the rest of the troops, formed athwart the road, charged the enemy in front. At a point behind the left of Cabell's line the Southerner, whittling on a white pine stick, explained these dispositions to his officers.[46]

As soon as he made contact with the Confederates, Colonel Williams parked his train as closely as the terrain allowed and called to the front all of the 1st Kansas. He formed a line with this regiment and placed his cavalry on the flanks, sending back word to Captain Duncan, commanding the reinforcements that arrived that morning, to dispose his men so as to protect the rear of the train. Soon Williams saw troops (Maxey's men) moving toward his right flank. Sending five companies of the 1st Kansas to the threatened point, he sent back to Duncan for reinforcements, but the courier returned with the depressing news that the rear guard was so closely pressed it could spare no men. At this moment Marmaduke opened a heavy and de-

[45] *Ibid.*, pp. 819, 841, 848–49.

[46] John M. Harrell, "Arkansas," in Vol. x of *Confederate Military History,* p. 249. Harrell says Maxey gave these directions, but the context shows this to be a slip of the pen.

structive cross fire of artillery and advanced in front and flank.[47] From its position on a wooded ridge overlooking the road, the left of Marmaduke's line swept down the hill at double-quick, trotted across abandoned fields, pushed through thickets of alder bushes, and advanced toward the road. The Confederates opened fire as they neared the Union line, and after a short, hot engagement at close range, the Negro troops broke and retreated in disorder. "Away trotted the poor black men into the forest," wrote a colonel of Cabell's brigade, "clinging to their rifles but not using them, while the pursuing Confederates cut them down right and left." [48]

Williams saw that he was greatly outnumbered, but he decided to defend his train as long as he could, hoping against hope that reinforcements might come from Camden in time to save him. Several times the Federals tried to make a stand, only to be irresistibly pushed back to and then beyond the parked train. Private Dickson Wallace, one of Tandy Walker's Choctaws, was the first to reach the enemy's abandoned howitzers, and he mounted astride one of them and "gave a whoop, which was followed by such a succession of whoops from his comrades as made the woods reverberate for miles around." [49]

> I feared [wrote Walker in his report] that the train and its contents would prove a temptation too strong for these hungry, half-clothed Choctaws, but had no trouble in pressing them forward, for there was that in front and to the left more inviting to them than food or clothing—the blood of their despised enemy. They had met and routed the forces of General Thayer, the ravagers of their country, the despoilers of their homes, and the murderers of their women and children. . . .[50]

Finally the Federals broke in rout and were pursued for about two miles by the howling Indians and yelling Westerners.

[47] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 744–45.
[48] Harrell, "Arkansas," *Confed. Mil. Hist.*, X, 250 ff.
[49] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 744–45, 791–92, 842, 848.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 849.

Fearing that Steele had heard the sounds of battle and might march out from Camden to rescue his detachment, Maxey called off the chase and turned his attention to securing the spoils of battle.[51] There was considerable dissatisfaction among the other general officers at this abandonment of the pursuit.[52]

Confederate booty consisted of four cannon, 170 wagons and teams (about thirty other wagons had been burnt), and over 100 prisoners.[53] According to a Southern officer, the wagons were "laden with corn, bacon, stolen bed-quilts, women's and children's clothing, hogs, geese, and all the *et ceteras* of unscrupulous plunder." [54] Colonel Harrell explained that "the negroes of Thayer's command had stripped the houses of the region they had visited of little baby frocks, shoes, stockings, women's bonnets, shawls and cloaks, to take home to their families in Kansas." [55] The cost of the victory was comparatively small: 115 killed, wounded, and missing, about four per cent of the effective strength of Maxey's command. In marked contrast, the Union loss was a total of 301 out of about 1050 effectives. Out of 438 men the 1st Kansas (Colored) lost 182, 117 being listed as killed. Colonel Williams said eyewitnesses assured him that some of the wounded Negroes were "murdered on the spot." [56] Possibly they were, but in war it is often difficult to draw the line between legitimate killing and murder.

When the demoralized survivors of Poison Spring straggled back to Camden, there was much indignation among Steele's men that the train had been sent out with such a small guard. Its capture aggravated the already critical supply situation. Meat was still being issued, but the hardtack had given out, and a

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 842.

[52] Edwards, *Shelby and His Men,* p. 276.

[53] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 844. And possibly some scalps. Cf. Sperry, *33d Iowa,* p. 81.

[54] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 847.

[55] Harrell, "Arkansas," *Confed. Mil. Hist.,* X, 250; see also Edwards, *Shelby and His Men,* p. 276.

[56] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 746.

steam mill in the town, to say nothing of portable iron hand mills, was kept in constant operation grinding out cornmeal.[57] One day the 33d Iowa's food ration was four ears of corn per man. Things looked considerably brighter on the 20th when a train arrived from Pine Bluff carrying ten days' half-rations and—almost as important to the rank and file—the mail.[58] But it proved to be only a prelude to further disaster.

Besides the debacle at Poison Spring and the shortage of supplies, Steele had other reasons to feel concerned. For some days now rumors and reports had been coming into headquarters to the effect that Banks had been repulsed and forced to fall back. On the 18th one of Steele's messengers, the only one who managed to get through to Banks and return, brought news that the Massachusetts general had defeated the enemy on April 8 and 9 but had been compelled to withdraw to Grand Ecore "for supplies." [59] In addition to this typically Banksian account of what had happened, the messenger was told of the loss of the cavalry train and artillery by one of Lee's staff officers. This was serious news. "Although I believe we can beat Price," Steele wrote Sherman on April 22, "I do not expect to meet successfully the whole force which Kirby Smith could send against me, if Banks should let him go." [60] On the next day Captain Dunham arrived carrying dispatches from Banks himself informing Steele of the retrograde movement and urging that Steele bring his army to the Red River and join the Army of the Gulf in operating on that line.[61] Steele immediately wrote Banks a letter and entrusted it to Dunham for delivery. He told Banks that he was unable to say when or

[57] Sperry, *33d Iowa,* p. 81.
[58] *Ibid.,* p. 82; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 668.
[59] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 661–62.
[60] *Ibid.,* p. 663.
[61] *Ibid.,* Part iii, 162. Captain Junius Wheeler, Steele's chief engineer, reported (*ibid.,* Part i, 676) that this request of Banks's was "so absurd that General Steele did not entertain it for one moment."

where he would meet him on the Red. It was reported that 8000 infantry had just reached Price, he said, and a general attack by the Confederates seemed to be a distinct possibility. "The rebels are said to be very much encouraged by an order of General E. K. Smith, detailing his successes against your command." Nevertheless, if he could get up sufficient reinforcements from the line of the Arkansas, he intended to test the mettle of the Confederates. The great problem, Steele continued, was supplies. If any gunboats could be spared from the Red, they would be of great value in establishing an all-water supply route via the Arkansas, Mississippi, Red, and Ouachita Rivers. It was impossible, he concluded, to move his command to the Red by way of the Ouachita, for that would leave Arkansas and Missouri open to Confederate invasion.[62] This letter clearly revealed the uncertainty and indecision that had collected about Steele's strategy ever since his arrival in Camden. The initiative had in fact been lost from the time when the need for supplies forced him to turn his back on the enemy near Washington. Now it was the Confederates' move, and they very soon pointed out to Steele the course he must follow.

On April 19 Kirby Smith reached the field of operations and took active charge of the campaign in Arkansas.[63] He had strong hopes, the general wrote his wife, of bagging the whole Union army.[64] Smith at once began to organize an expedition to cross the Ouachita and break up Steele's lines and bases of supply at and between Camden, Little Rock, and Pine Bluff. Price had been ordered to do this several days ago,[65] but he had not yet had the chance. All of Steele's army was not in Camden until the 16th, and the next two days were spent in dealing with the Federals at Poison Spring, a task requiring the services of

[62] *Ibid.,* Part iii, 267–68. He also told Banks about the defeat at Poison Spring.
[63] *Ibid.,* Part i, 781.
[64] Kirby Smith to his wife, April 18, 1864, Kirby Smith Papers.
[65] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 481; Part iii, 766.

five of the seven Southern brigades then in the field. Troops were now available, however, and General Fagan was directed to take his division, with Shelby's brigade temporarily attached, and attack the enemy's communications and his bases of supply on the Arkansas River. When this was accomplished, he was then to place his command between Steele and Little Rock.[66] While Fagan was collecting his men, the infantry of Churchill and Parsons was marching toward Camden, and by the 20th the two small divisions were at Magnolia and Calhoun.[67] On the 23d, to divert attention from Fagan's crossing of the Ouachita, this infantry made demonstrations before Camden, which led Steele to think that a general attack might be in the making.[68]

On April 24 Fagan arrived at Eldorado Landing on the Ouachita and there learned from Shelby's scouts that Steele's supply train had started on the return trip to Pine Bluff two days before, guarded by a heavy force. Thereupon Fagan made a forced march of forty-five miles in an attempt to intercept the enemy before he reached the crossing of the Saline at Mount Elba. By the time he camped at midnight, he was not far from Marks' Mills, where the road upon which he was traveling intersected the Camden - Mount Elba - Pine Bluff road. Before daylight, scouts brought in word that the Federals had not yet passed Marks' Mills, and Fagan decided to attack at that point.[69]

The train that the Confederates coveted consisted of 240 government wagons and a number of other vehicles belonging to sutlers and private persons. It was guarded by three regiments of infantry, 43d Indiana, 36th Iowa, and 77th Ohio, and a de-

[66] *Ibid.*, Part i, 481, 781.

[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 534–35. Walker's division was still near Minden. On the 20th, Smith intended to send it to Taylor, but when news of Banks's retreat from Grand Ecore was received, he ordered it to Arkansas.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 781; Part iii, 267–68; Sperry, *33d Iowa*, p. 83.

[69] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 788.

tachment of 240 cavalry, making in all some 1440 men. In the words of Lieutenant Colonel Francis M. Drake, commanding the whole force, the train was also accompanied by a "large number of citizens, cotton speculators, Arkansas refugees, sutlers, and other army followers, and also some 300 negroes." The roads were muddy and cut up, and the going was difficult, but otherwise the march out from Camden had been uneventful. When the column encamped on the evening of the 24th, no one suspected that there was a large body of enemy troops nearby.[70]

At dawn of the following day Fagan moved against the invaders. As the head of his column neared the road upon which the Federals were marching, he ordered Shelby to take his own and Crawford's brigades, strike out eastward, and interpose his troops between the enemy and the Saline River.[71] In the meantime Cabell formed his brigade parallel to the Camden - Pine Bluff road, began skirmishing with the Federals, and sent word to Dockery to hurry up with his command. Fagan told him that he would attend to the placement of Dockery's brigade. Cabell thereupon pushed his men up close to the opposing line and informed Fagan of his position. Fagan told him to attack the train. Cabell advanced and drove the enemy through and some distance beyond the wagons. Then he discovered that the Federals had massed on his left flank and were pressing heavily on a part of Monroe's regiment. In a rather unusual maneuver Cabell about-faced his line of battle and moved to Monroe's assistance. There ensued a bloody action of an hour and a half. The Southerners suffered severely from the musketry of the 43d Indiana and the 36th Iowa, but "Old Tige" Cabell hung on grimly. Then at last Dockery arrived, formed on Cabell's left,

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 712–13. The three infantry regiments formed the Second Brigade, Third Division, 7th Corps. The strength of the detachment (1440), as given by Drake, probably refers to effectives and is so considered here.

[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 788–89.

and attacked the enemy. Old Tige's men joined in the charge and the Federals were forced to take shelter among some of the wagons and in two nearby buildings. At this point in the action Shelby fell upon the left and rear of the Union line. He had made a forced march of ten miles, dispatched a regiment to hold the crossing of the Saline at Mount Elba, and moved down the Camden road with the rest of his men, attacking and driving the enemy just as their line was being broken by Dockery and Cabell.[72] Bitter fighting, hand to hand in places, continued for a short time, and then white flags began to flutter here and there on the field. The 43d Indiana and the 36th Iowa were captured, together with the Federal commander, Drake, who had been severely wounded.[73]

The Confederates now turned their attention to the 77th Ohio, which, having been the rear guard of the column, had not been able to join the rest of Drake's forces. Probably realizing they were in a hopeless position, the men of this regiment put up an indifferent fight and were soon overwhelmed, most of them being captured. The Southerners then clashed with 500 men of the 1st Iowa Cavalry, veterans going home on furlough, who had been marching from Camden several miles behind the wagon train. Fagan's troops quickly drove back the Iowans, and then the day's fighting was over.[74]

It had taken five hours to subdue the dead-game Federals. Including a detachment of cavalry from Pine Bluff that had come on the field just before the action opened, there was a total of about 1600 Northerners engaged, excluding, of course, the 1st Iowa Cavalry. Losses were never fully reported, but certainly they could not have been less than 1300, the great majority being captured. This does not include contrabands killed in the course of the engagement by Southerners whose

[72] *Ibid.*, pp. 789, 794, 835–36.
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 714; Harrell, "Arkansas," *Confed. Mil. Hist.*, x, 255.
[74] Edwards, *Shelby and His Men*, p. 279; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 668.

officers were unable to restrain them.[75] Detachments and horse-holders reduced to 2500 the number of men Fagan was able to bring into action. Confederate casualties were only partially reported, but they could scarcely have been fewer than 500, including the lightly wounded.[76] The entire train, part of which was burnt during the fight, private vehicles, ambulances, five guns, 150 Negroes, and valuable official reports and returns concerning Steele's army were the prizes, other than military prisoners, which were garnered from the field by Fagan's men.[77]

This affair was undoubtedly a resounding Confederate success. However, the victors' losses were disproportionately high, and there seems little question that this was largely a result of the tactics employed. The command was committed to action piecemeal: first, Cabell; then, after a long delay, Dockery; and last, Shelby. Official reports of the action are too incomplete to fix responsibility for the lack of co-ordination; quite possibly it was unavoidable. Dockery's delay was caused by the fact that his brigade had formed the rear of the column, and he had stopped to forage his horses a few miles from the battlefield.[78] Aside from the defective co-ordination of the attacks, the tactics employed at Marks' Mills were very similar to those used by Maxey and Marmaduke at Poison Spring.

News of the disaster at Marks' Mills precipitated a crisis at Steele's headquarters. It had been difficult enough before to obtain food and forage; the loss of this second train rendered it impossible. Besides his men, Steele had almost 9000 horses and mules to feed, and there was not enough forage in the vicinity of Camden to keep 1000 of them alive. Steele had to decide

[75] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 713; Edwards, *Shelby and His Men*, p. 279. Drake estimated killed and wounded at 250 (*O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 692, 714). Fagan claimed "over 1300" prisoners (*ibid.*, p. 798).

[76] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 787, 795.

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 781, 789.

[78] Harrell, "Arkansas," *Confed. Mil. Hist.*, X, 254.

what was to be done before his command was immobilized by a breakdown in transportation and the consumption of the remaining supplies. Therefore on the night of the 25th he called a council of war. Generals Saloman, Carr, and Thayer advised an immediate retreat to the Arkansas River. General Rice favored destroying all the bridges over the Ouachita, falling back to Hampton, twenty-five miles to the east, "and then if needful go toward the Arkansas." [79] There seemed to be only one alternative to starvation and capture. Steele ordered an immediate retreat to Little Rock.

The next day saw feverish preparations for the withdrawal. Everything of value that could not be taken with the army was destroyed: tents, mess chests, cooking utensils, harnesses, ninety-two wagons, and even a quantity of hardtack and bacon that could have been distributed among the troops.[80] In the afternoon the men received the skimpy rations that had to last all the way back to Little Rock; many of them got only two crackers and a half a pint of cornmeal. In order to mislead the Confederates, tattoo was noisily sounded by the drums at eight o'clock, and an hour later a bass drum sounded taps.[81] By midnight the train was across the Ouachita, and then the rear of the army filed silently down to the river and over the pontoon bridge. A few miles from Camden a halt was called, and the exhausted Federals fell in their tracks and slept.[82]

The Confederates did not discover the flight of the enemy for several hours and it was nine in the morning before they entered Camden. The divisions of Churchill and Parsons, now commanded by Price, occupied the town; Walker's division joined them at four that afternoon.[83] For the present, pursuit

[79] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 665, 668, 671, 681, 683.
[80] *Ibid.,* p. 680; Sperry, *33d Iowa,* p. 85.
[81] Sperry, *33d Iowa,* pp. 85–86.
[82] *Ibid.,* pp. 86–87; *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 688.
[83] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 782; Harrell, "Arkansas," *Confed. Mil. Hist.,* x, 264; Blessington, *Walker's Division,* p. 247.

was impossible: Smith's army had no pontoon train. At White Hall Marmaduke's small cavalry force began swimming the river, an undertaking that was not completed until early the next morning. At Camden work was started on a floating bridge or raft. It was completed by nightfall on the 27th, and the next morning the Confederates put the Ouachita behind them and started after Steele.[84] But before leaving Camden, Kirby Smith thanked General Maxey and the men of his division for their assistance and sent them back to the Indian Territory. This piece of folly was probably prompted by reports of a prospective invasion of the territory from Missouri.[85] It is scarcely necessary to say that no events in that quarter could have been important enough to justify this drastic reduction of the available cavalry force when the army was trying to overtake and bring to battle a fleeing enemy.[86]

While the Confederates were bridging the Ouachita, Steele and his men were hurrying along the road that led through Princeton and Jenkins' Ferry to Little Rock. Steele chose this line of retreat rather than the Mount Elba - Pine Bluff route in order to avoid the mud of the Moro swamp.[87] Regardless of the road, it was stern, hard marching. "Signs enough of the precipitation of our retreat," wrote Sperry of the 33d Iowa, "appeared in the constant succession of shreds of clothing, pieces of knapsack, and other fragments, which fatigue compelled our men to throw away." [88]

Rumors spread through the Federal ranks that the enemy had got between the army and Little Rock, and indeed Fagan's

[84] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 782, 826–27, 829.

[85] *Ibid.,* pp. 845–46; Part iii, 794–95, 797–98.

[86] It is only fair to say that Kirby Smith may not have had complete control over Tandy Walker's brigade. The discipline of Indian troops was always uncertain, and they were apt to go home when they felt like it. Cf. Annie H. Abel, *The American Indian as a Participant in the Civil War* (Cleveland, 1919), pp. 326–27. Of course, there was no such excuse in the case of Gano's Texas brigade.

[87] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 668–69.

[88] Sperry, *33d Iowa,* p. 87.

command had crossed the road on the 27th a few hours in advance of the Union army without becoming aware of its presence.[89] Fagan had marched northward from his camp at Marks' Mills with the intention of carrying out his orders to attack Union bases along the Arkansas, but he had found it impossible to get across the rampaging Saline, then over its banks in many places. Unaware that Steele had evacuated Camden, Fagan marched higher and higher up the river looking for a way over, turning back finally about ten miles south of Benton when he was unable to cross at Pratt's Ferry. Having heard nothing from headquarters, and being destitute of food and forage, he headed his command for Arkadelphia on the morning of the 29th to try to find supplies for his men and horses.[90]

The Federals started early on the 28th and by 1 P.M. they were in the pleasant little town of Princeton, where the rear of the column bivouacked that night. The rain began to come down about noon the next day, and before dark the mud was very bad. During the day the rear guard had skirmishes with Marmaduke's troopers.[91] Early in the afternoon the van of the army reached Jenkins' Ferry on the Saline, as shown by the sketch found on page 174. Here, as elsewhere, the river was far past fording. The pontoon train—all that was standing between the Federals and Southern prisoner-of-war camps—was brought forward and by 4:15 P.M. the Saline was bridged. Then began the back-breaking labor of getting the wagons and artillery through the muck of the river bottom and over the bridge. "It

[89] *Ibid.; O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 669.

[90] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 790. This account follows Fagan's report. However, Harrell, who was with Fagan, wrote as follows: "The commanding officer seemed to be in a state of uncertainty, his force having been diminished by the necessary details . . . and by the killed and wounded. He was also without forage or subsistence, and the Saline was rising, though not absolutely impassable. The general's home was upon it a short distance above, and he knew it afforded no insuperable obstacle if he was prepared to advance." Harrell, "Arkansas," *Confed. Mil. Hist.* X, 261.

[91] Sperry, *33d Iowa,* pp. 88–89; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 829.

soon became a sea of mud," Captain Junius Wheeler, Steele's chief engineer, wrote in his official report.

> [The] wagons settled to the axles and mules floundered about without a resting place for their feet. Fires were made along the road, pioneers and working details set to work, and every exertion was made to push the impedimenta across before daylight, it being evident that the enemy were in force in our rear. But we failed. The rain came down in torrents, putting out many of the fires, the men became exhausted, and both they and the animals sank down in the mud and mire, wherever they were, to seek a few hours' repose.[92]

That night the leading Confederate infantry, urged on by the women along the route, camped north of Princeton, only nine miles behind Steele's men. By midnight they were up and marching again, through rain and darkness. By 7:30 A.M. the leading division, Churchill's, had come up to where Marmaduke's cavalry was skirmishing with the enemy.[93] The Union infantry had not yet crossed the river. Steele had been brought to bay.

The field of battle at Jenkins' Ferry was a nightmare to both armies. About two miles from the river the road from Camden descended a bluff and entered a narrow defile which extended to the Saline. Immediately to the north of the road and parallel to it ran a small bayou, a cane swamp and thicket on the left bank and a steep bluff on the right. Bordering the south side of the road were two fields, divided by a broad strip of timber, with timber also on the east and south sides. Along the eastern side of the field nearest the river the Federals had felled large trees to form log breastworks and abatis. The space between the timber on the south side of the fields and the bayou on the north was only about a quarter of a mile in width, leaving an extremely constricted field of maneuver. To reach the enemy the Confederates had to advance down the narrow rectangle

[92] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 677.
[93] *Ibid.,* pp. 782, 799–800.

formed by the two fields and attack his lines of log defenses along the far side of the second field. To make the task even more difficult, much of the ground was covered by water and mud up to the soldiers' knees.[94]

Marmaduke's troopers had been engaging the enemy for over two hours when Churchill's division arrived on the scene. After several confusing and contradictory orders from Price, Tappan's brigade was formed in line of battle and sent forward. It traversed the first field and the belt of timber and met the enemy's skirmishers in the middle of the second field. These were quickly pushed back to the main Union line at the far edge of the field, and at 8 A.M. Tappan became heavily engaged.[95] He was soon obliged to call for help, so hot was the fire. Churchill sent in Hawthorne's brigade, which arrived about 8:45, and Tappan took position on the right of these troops. In the meantime a regiment of Dockery's infantry[96] temporarily attached to Churchill's division was sent across the bayou (Toxie Creek) by Kirby Smith to attack the enemy's right flank. After marching down the left bank of the stream for about half a mile Lieutenant Colonel H. G. P. Williams, commanding the regiment, was able to open a raking fire on the Federals on the other side. He was soon engaged by a force on the north bank consisting of the remnants of the brigade Fagan had demolished at Marks' Mills and two companies of the 29th Iowa.[97]

South of the Creek, where the serious fighting was taking place, the remaining brigade of Churchill's division, Gause's, was sent into action to support Tappan and Hawthorne. By ten o'clock the Confederate line was being pressed so heavily

[94] *Ibid.,* pp. 782, 800, 802, 809, 815, 817; Blessington, *Walker's Division,* p. 249; Harrell, "Arkansas," *Confed. Mil. Hist.,* x, 265; Sperry, *33d Iowa,* pp. 90–91.
[95] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 801–802, 829–30.
[96] The mounted portion of Dockery's brigade was with Fagan.
[97] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 697, 725, 808.

that it was necessary to send in Parsons' division. While in the belt of woods between the fields Parsons met Price, who directed him to form on Churchill's right and advance on the enemy. As he was en route to execute this order, Parsons met Churchill himself, who said that unless his left or center was supported he would have to retreat. Therefore Parsons sent Clark's brigade to take position on Gause's left, while he took Burns's brigade and formed on Gause's right.[98] The first Confederate line now consisted of, from right to left, Tappan and Hawthorne, and the second line of Burns, Gause, and Clark. The fighting now became savage in its intensity. The Southerners advanced repeatedly only to be repulsed each time. A thick layer of fog and gunsmoke covered the field like a woolen blanket, making it necessary to stoop and look under the layer before taking aim.[99] On the right of Steele's line the 2d Kansas (Colored) captured three guns of Ruffner's Missouri battery, which had approached the regiment under the impression that it was a Confederate unit, showing how exceedingly poor the visibility was.

With ammunition in many commands running out and the enemy fire from front and flank becoming unbearably hot, the two Southern divisions were forced back in confusion. Seeing his men faltering, at 11:30 Price ordered Churchill and Parsons to withdraw to the foot of the bluff at the western end of the first field. They were followed by a small number of Federals, but there was no serious pursuit.[100] At about the same time Kirby Smith directed Williams to recross Toxie Creek and rejoin his division.[101]

[98] *Ibid.*, pp. 811–12. Some of these brigades, it should be remembered, were no more than regiments in size at this time. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 799–800; LIII, 987; Blessington, *Walker's Division*, p. 248.

[99] Sperry, *33d Iowa*, p. 91.

[100] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 556–57, 758, 800, 802–807, 812–13. Lt. John Lockhart, captured with Ruffner's battery, stated that three of the eight others captured were killed after surrendering.

[101] *Ibid.*, p. 808. The time is not certain, however.

In the meantime Walker's division had come up and Kirby Smith ordered Scurry and Randal to take their brigades and attack the Federals' left flank, Waul's brigade being held in reserve at the bluff. Churchill and Parsons were withdrawn before Walker could make contact with the enemy. Waul's brigade was then moved up through the field and placed on the left of Randal. Parsons was sent to Waul's support but drifted off to the right and was not seriously engaged. The Texans attacked the enemy with spirit but failed to make any impression on their lines. All of Walker's brigadiers were wounded, Scurry and Randal mortally. Elements of Churchill's much-battered division were sent in to reinforce Waul's left, but no progress could be made on that part of the field. Finally at about 12:30 P.M. the Confederates retired to the western edge of the field, and the battle was over. Just after the fighting had ended, Fagan arrived. He had been thirty-four miles away late the previous night when word came that the Union army was at Jenkins' Ferry, and in spite of a forced march he was unable to get to the field in time to take part in the action.[102]

During the time the battle was taking place the Federals were working desperately to get the rest of their train across the Saline, and by 11 A.M. everything was over except the infantry and one section of artillery. When the Confederates retired for the last time, General Saloman, with Steele's approval, pulled his line back to an even stronger position nearer the river. From that point the crossing was resumed, and by two in the afternoon the last of the infantry was over. Artillery and infantry were then drawn up on the east bank to protect the pontoon bridge and give any stragglers who were still on the other side a chance to escape. Shortly before three o'clock word came in that there were no more men on the road, and the bridge was dismantled and destroyed, since the weakness

[102] *Ibid.*, pp. 556–57, 677, 725–26, 817; Paris, *Civil War in America*, IV, 557.

of the draft animals made it impossible to carry it back to Little Rock. The seriously wounded had to be left to the care of the enemy.[103]

Although pursuit was cut off, Steele's army still faced an ordeal as bad in its way as the recent combat. Once over the Saline the weary men and mules found that they had left a deep slough for a deeper one. Water and mud were waist deep in places, and timber with which to corduroy the road was almost completely lacking. When teams gave out, those of sutlers' wagons were commandeered; when these gave out, the wagons were burned. Animals too weak to be led were set free. Some vehicles became hopelessly embedded in the mud.

> One wagon [Sperry wrote] contained a half-dozen negro babies, of assorted sizes, belonging to the colored Americans gathered to us since we started, which had been left there, stuck in the slough, drawn there by the feeblest of all possible mules, that was just executing his last drowning kick as we waded by. One negro woman, as was told by many who said they witnessed the incident, having carried her baby as long as she felt able, threw it away and left it, as a soldier would his knapsack. What became of the child can not be told; but probably it was not the only one abandoned.[104]

Often tragedy walked with the crowds of contrabands as they flocked blindly after Northern armies. For thousands the day of Jubilee was a day of bitter and bewildering travail.

From early on the morning of May 1 to 4 A.M. the next day, the dazed Federals marched, their path through the darkness lit by fires cavalry details had kindled. "It was a strange, wild time," recalled Sperry. The men had long been hungry, but now they began to suffer for want of food. One hardtack was

[103] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 668, 670, 677, 690.

[104] Sperry, *33d Iowa,* pp. 94–95; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 670, 678, 680–81. The worst part of the road was a two-mile stretch after leaving the river bottom; "those two miles," said Wheeler, "surpass any that I have ever seen." (*O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 678.)

bought for two dollars; two were traded for a silver watch.[105] By mid-afternoon the column reached the Benton road, and in another hour or so a shout was raised from the van: a train of provisions had arrived from Little Rock. After an uncomfortably cold but restorative night, the march was resumed. By ten-thirty the fortifications of Little Rock could be seen. A halt was made to dress up the tattered column into something resembling military order. Then, with prisoners and the three captured cannon—meager trophies of the campaign—prominently displayed, the army paraded into the town. It was good to be back, said Sperry, almost too good to be true.[106]

Back at the Saline the Confederates made no serious effort to pursue; indeed, they could make none, since, as at Camden, there was no bridge or ford. And in all probability there was little inclination on the part of either officers or men to follow, after the bloody fiasco at Jenkins' Ferry. Into this battle Kirby Smith had thrown, first and last, about 6000 men, including Marmaduke's cavalry.[107] Of these 800 to 1000 were killed or wounded.[108] As for the Federals, Steele stated that he had no more than 4000 men engaged on the 30th: Saloman's Third Division (First and Third Brigades and fragments of the Second) and at least three regiments of Thayer's Frontier Division (1st Arkansas and 2d and 12th Kansas). Returns from Saloman's division and the 2d Kansas (Colored) show 594 killed, wounded, and missing, and probably unreported casualties from other units would raise the total to at least 700.[109]

Jenkins' Ferry was the Confederates' last chance to bag the

[105] Sperry, *33d Iowa*, p. 97.

[106] *Ibid.*, pp. 96–98; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 393–94.

[107] It is estimated that Churchill and Walker each took about 2000 effectives into action, Parsons possibly 1200.

[108] Cf. *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 557; Edwards, *Shelby and His Men*, p. 297. For incomplete returns see *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 787–88, 801, 812, 815.

[109] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 691, 758. This is a conservative estimate of casualties.

bulk of Steele's army. When all due allowance has been made for the weather and terrain, the fact remains that from the Southern point of view the battle was badly mismanaged by Price and Kirby Smith. The infantry was fed into the Federal meatgrinder piecemeal: first Tappan's brigade, then Hawthorne's, then Gause's, then those of Burns and Clark, then Scurry and Randal, then Waul, and finally elements of Churchill's and Parsons' divisions were sent in for the second time. The most vulnerable part of the Union line was its left flank, but until the moment when Walker came up, all the attacks, except Williams' demonstration north of Toxie Creek, had been made frontally across the open field, where the Southern line was enfiladed by musketry on both flanks. Assault after assault was launched as each small command came into action, and by the time Walker came up on the right, the other two divisions had been fought out and were compelled to retire. The repulse was more complete than Taylor's at Pleasant Hill, and the Confederate attacks were far more disjointed.

Despite this disappointing climax, the campaign against Steele had been on the whole a successful one. The Federals had been forced to retreat in frantic haste only ten days after their arrival in Camden. They had suffered some 2750 casualties as compared to the Confederates' 2300.[110] Steele's quartermaster reported a loss during the campaign of 635 wagons and 2500 mules.[111] These figures do not include the considerable number of sutlers' wagons captured by Fagan at Marks' Mills.[112] The only loss of matériel sustained by the Southerners was a train of 35 wagons burned at Longview on March

[110] These figures are estimates. They include the Mount Elba and Longview affairs of March 30 (cf. *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 770–71, 779–80) and an estimated 300 casualties for each side for the losses in the numerous skirmishes for which there are no returns.

[111] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 684.

[112] Cf. Harrell, "Arkansas," *Confed. Mil. Hist.,* X, 255.

30 and the three guns lost at Jenkins' Ferry. The loss in artillery was more than offset by the capture from the Federals of nine field pieces at Poison Spring and Marks' Mills.

The one major cause of Steele's failure was his lack of supplies. This sprang from (1) the poverty of the country through which he marched and (2) the insecurity of his lines of supply from the Arkansas River. If he had been entirely unopposed by hostile troops, Steele could have reached Shreveport, although his army would probably have been very hungry when it got there. But with a strong active enemy to impede his march, delaying him as his army consumed precious supplies, the task was impossible. Since Steele opposed the campaign from the first, and undertook it only in response to a direct order from Grant, he cannot be held responsible for its failure. He must, however, bear the responsibility for the loss of his trains. With 10,000 effectives at Camden he allowed his trains to go out of the town, one protected by 1100 men and the other by 1400, including detachments of his very inferior cavalry. Since he believed that Price had 5000 or more cavalry,[113] he should have foreseen the necessity for larger escorts; 3000 men at least should have been sent. On the other hand, Steele had to his credit the slow but well-conducted march from Little Rock and the successful rear-guard action at Jenkins' Ferry.

Sterling Price did not distinguish himself in this campaign. He took too long to concentrate his cavalry against the enemy column, and his handling of his infantry at Jenkins' Ferry could scarcely have been worse. He could, however, claim some of the credit for the victory at Poison Spring. He had seen to it that overwhelming numbers—the secret of success in an attack on a detachment—had been brought to bear on the enemy.

[113] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 660–61.

Kirby Smith participated personally in only one engagement, that at Jenkins' Ferry, and there he did not win any laurels. Sending Fagan across the Ouachita to operate in Steele's rear was a wise, though obvious, move. Otherwise Smith's part in the campaign consisted mainly in bringing up the infantry from Louisiana, and the strategic significance of this move will be discussed in a later chapter.

On the night of April 30 the Confederate army camped near the field of battle, wet, cold, and dispirited. During the night Brigadier General William Scurry died of his wounds. His corpse was taken back to the little town of Tulip and given a military funeral. An hour after the ceremony was over, he was joined in death by his fellow brigadier, Horace Randal.[114] On May 3 the army was ordered back to Camden, and a few days later the infantry was ordered by Smith to march to Louisiana and report to Taylor.[115] It was too late then. The campaign would be over before they ever reached the Red River.

114 Blessington, *Walker's Division,* pp. 254–60.
115 *Ibid.,* p. 260; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 482.

CHAPTER VII

*

Banks Retreats Again

*

In eighteen hundred and sixty-four,
Foot balls, foot balls;
In eighteen hundred and sixty-four,
Foot balls, says I;
In eighteen hundred and sixty-four,
We all skedaddled to Grand Ecore
We'll all drink stone blind,
Johnny, fill up the bowl!

[Tune: "When Johnny Comes Marching Home."]

THE YANKEE SOLDIERS sang this and other improvised ballads as they hiked down the long road from Pleasant Hill to Grand Ecore,[1] sometimes ending their ditty with a derisive shout of "Napoleon P. Banks." [2] Sneering at the unfortunate Banks was about all the satisfaction to be got from that march. The narrow road had already been badly cut up by the train, which left burning wagons, tents, and other heavy articles in its wake.[3] On April 11, the rear guard, Shaw's battle-worn brigade, was severely harassed by Southern cavalry, and it was with weary relief that the end of the column finally filed into Grand Ecore that evening.[4] The hamlet was situated on a high

[1] Beecher, *114th New York*, p. 326.
[2] Homans, *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.*, VIII, 85–86.
[3] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 609; Part iii, 115.
[4] Scott, *32d Iowa*, pp. 142–43.

bluff overlooking the river,[5] and undoubtedly there were many who stared long and hard upstream in hopes of seeing a telltale wisp of smoke around the bend. Somewhere up there was Porter's fleet—or perhaps by now it was Dick Taylor's fleet.

Admiral Porter was certainly having his troubles. According to his understanding with Banks, he left Grand Ecore on April 7, with Loggy Bayou as his destination, some 100 miles upstream. At that point it was expected that the army and navy would make contact, and that Banks would be able to provision his army and replenish his ammunition from the stores carried by the transports the navy was convoying. Because of the low stage of water in the Red, Porter could not risk taking his larger vessels above Grand Ecore, but nevertheless he carried with him an imposing array of naval might. He took the *Osage* and *Neosho,* river monitors and among the most powerful boats then afloat on inland waters; the *Chillicothe,* an armored steamer of the Eads type; the tinclads *Fort Hindman* and *Cricket,* which Porter made his flagship for the trip; the veteran wooden gunboat *Lexington;* two tugs, the *Dahlia* and *Brown;* and the naval transport *Benefit.*[6] Accompanying the gunboats were some two dozen transports and quartermaster boats. In addition to food and ammunition for Banks's army, these vessels carried as a guard T. Kilby Smith's detachment

[5] Beecher, *114th New York,* p. 327.

[6] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 275–76; *O. R. N.,* XXVI, xvi–xvii, 51, 59–60, 105; Francis T. Miller, ed. in chief, *The Photographic History of the Civil War* (New York, 1911), V, 145; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 366; H. Allen Gosnell, *Guns on the Western Waters* (Baton Rouge, 1949), p. 15. Armament was as follows: *Osage,* 2 11-in. (turret), 1 12-pdr. how.; *Neosho,* 2 11-in. (turret), 2 12-pdr. how.; *Chillicothe,* 2 11-in., 1 12-pdr. how.; *Cricket,* 2 20-pdr. Parrotts, 4 24-pdr. how., 1 12-pdr. how.; *Lexington,* 4 8-in., 2 30-pdr. Parrotts, 1 32-pdr.; *Fort Hindman,* 6 8-in., 1 12-pdr. how.; *William H. Brown* carried two guns, caliber not recorded; *Dahlia* and *Benefit* both were probably unarmed at this time. The *Gazelle* (6 12-pdr. rif. how.) did not accompany Porter, but came up the river in time to get in the fight at Blair's Landing, April 12 (*O. R. N.,* XXVI, 786).

of the 17th Corps, about 1600 effectives. The army boats were commanded by Smith, who placed an armed guard aboard each of them and mounted artillery on some.[7]

At 5 P.M. of the 7th the flotilla reached Campti, where Smith landed a regiment to reconnoiter. No enemy troops were discovered; it was reported that a Confederate force had retreated rapidly upstream. The expedition did not get under way until half past ten the following morning as a result of the grounding of the transport *Iberville*. Navigation was, in fact, very hazardous. Water was low, the channel narrow and tortuous, and the bottom strewn with stumps and snags that could snatch the keelson out of any wooden-hulled river boat. By six that evening Coushatta Chute [8] was reached. Hearing that Confederate troops were in the vicinity, Smith sent Colonel Lyman Ward's brigade ashore to keep an eye on the enemy and prevent him from attacking the fleet. A small group of Southerners encountered by Ward promptly retreated with a loss of two prisoners.[9]

The long line of vessels started up the river again at nine the next morning. The rich land of the Red River flood plain provided the Federals with corn and cattle, and as usual the approach of the invaders caused the Confederates to fire all cotton exposed to capture. On both the 8th and 9th vague rumors of a battle filtered through to the fleet, but always to the effect that the enemy was defeated and in full retreat.[10] Late in the afternoon of the 9th Nine Mile Bend was reached, and by 2 P.M. the next day the expedition had arrived at its destination, the mouth of Loggy Bayou.[11] There a small contingent of

[7] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 168, 379–80.

[8] See the sketch on p. 114.

[9] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 380. The Confederates probably belonged to the command of Brigadier General St. John R. Liddell, commanding Sub-District of North Louisiana.

[10] *O. R. N.*, XXVI, 60.

[11] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 380.

Southern scouts who had been keeping watch on the flotilla's trip up the Red were surprised and scattered by a landing party from the *Cricket.* A mile above Loggy Bayou the Federals found that their opponents had in turn been preparing a surprise for them. "It was the smartest thing I ever knew the rebels to do," Porter told his old friend Sherman. "They had gotten that huge steamer, *New Falls City,* across Red River, 1 mile above Loggy Bayou, 15 feet of her on shore on each side, the boat broken down in the middle, and a sand bar making below her. An invitation in large letters to attend a ball in Shreveport was kindly left stuck up by the rebels. . . ." [12]

While Porter was wondering how he could remove the *New Falls City,* Kilby Smith began landing troops to conduct a reconnaissance, to try, if possible, to establish contact with Banks's army.[13] As was customary with the men from Sherman's army, the Federals took this opportunity of plundering the nearby countryside. Before they could really get warmed to their work, and before Porter could get the *New Falls City* out of the way, Captain William H. C. Andres, escorted by fifty men from the 14th New York Cavalry, appeared bearing dispatches from Banks. He brought news of the defeat at Sabine Crossroads and of the battle on the 9th and, in addition to written dispatches, a verbal order from Banks to T. Kilby Smith to turn back. Although at first reluctant to credit a verbal order to retreat, Smith, in consultation with Porter, decided that in view of the fact that the army was evidently far in their rear, the only sane course was to go back before the Confederates could blockade the river with artillery and cut them off.[14]

[12] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 60.

[13] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 380.

[14] *Ibid.,* 380, 452; Part iii, 98–99; *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 51, 60, 789; *Com. Con. War,* p. 203. Banks addressed at least three notes to Porter on the 9th. The first announced the defeat at Sabine Crossroads and said that the army would fall back on Grand Ecore. The next also told of Sabine Crossroads, adding news of the

With great difficulty the boats were reversed in the narrow channel; the larger ones were compelled to back down several miles before they could turn around.[15] Porter wrote Sherman that it was "with a heavy heart" that they turned downstream, "anticipating that the rebels, flushed with victory, with our army in full retreat before them, would come in on our flank and cut us to pieces."[16] Even without the attentions of the enemy the trip to Grand Ecore would have been a sailor's nightmare. On the broad Mississippi, downstream navigation during low water was a hazardous proposition; on a comparatively small river like the Red it was infinitely worse. To be able to steer it was necessary to keep way on the boats. This meant adding the speed of the boat to the speed of the current, which was particularly swift in the seemingly numberless bends, with the consequent danger of grounding solidly or even staving in the hull. Add to this the more or less continuous harassment from the Confederates on both banks of the river, and it is obvious that the Federals were in a very ugly situation.

Accidents started to happen almost immediately. In the middle of the afternoon the *Chillicothe* ran up on a submerged stump and stuck. Two hours' work availed nothing, but at last the *Black Hawk* came along, took aboard the *Chillicothe's* heavy hawser, and pulled her off. The next day some of the transports got into difficulty and caused further delay. Late

repulse of the Confederates at Pleasant Grove. It stated further that a junction had been formed with A. J. Smith and that it was Banks's intention to advance that evening, expecting to establish contact with the fleet at Springfield Landing on either the 11th or 12th. In all probability this message was never sent. The third, written at 9:30 P.M., sent news of Taylor's repulse at Pleasant Hill, saying that the "victory is a complete one, and together with the loss of morale, will contribute greatly to the object in view in the expedition," but without saying what that "object" was at the moment, or what the fleet should do. Andres had set out from Pleasant Hill at midnight on the 9th; he and his escort were taken down the river on one of the transports.

[15] Newsome, *Experience in the War,* p. 126.

[16] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 61.

in the afternoon musketry fire rattled on the sides of the *Benefit, Black Hawk,* and *Osage,* and the gunboats replied by shelling the banks, although shooting at snipers with eleven-inch guns must have been like hunting partridges with a howitzer. At 7:15 P.M. the *Emerald* ran aground. By this time unshipped rudders and broken wheels were commonplace.[17] At eight that evening Coushatta Chute was reached, and here Kilby Smith received a written dispatch from Banks directing him to return immediately to Grand Ecore with his troops and steamers.[18]

The morning of the 12th brought no respite. At nine o'clock the *Lexington* collided with the transport *Rob Roy,* the former staving in her wheel house and launch and damaging her chimneys, forcing her to lay to for repairs.[19] But it was not until the Federals neared Blair's Landing, forty-five miles by water above Grand Ecore, that they received their warmest reception. Confident that the fleet would turn back as soon as the news of Banks's misfortunes arrived, Taylor had decided to try to cut it off and, if possible, destroy or capture the whole expedition. For this purpose Bagby's brigade of cavalry was sent out from Mansfield on the 11th. Bagby, however, was delayed in crossing Bayou Pierre because he had no pontoon train, something which Taylor had repeatedly asked headquarters to send him, and by the time Grand Bayou was reached Porter had slipped by. Another attempt at interception was made when Tom Green set out from Pleasant Hill with several regiments of cavalry at 6 P.M. on the 11th. Like Bagby, Green lost considerable time in crossing Bayou Pierre, but finally his men covered the sixteen miles to the Red and appeared on the south bank of the river at and below Blair's Landing. At about four in the afternoon of the 12th Green

[17] *Ibid.,* pp. 778, 781, 789.
[18] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 381.
[19] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 789.

got his men into position and opened on the Union boats with musketry and a four-gun field battery.[20]

The vessels immediately involved were the transports *Hastings,* which had tied up at the landing to repair her wheel, the *Alice Vivian,* carrying 400 cavalry horses, which was aground in midstream, and the *Emerald* and *Clara Bell,* which were trying to assist the *Alice Vivian.* Below the latter lay the *Osage,* also aground, and the transport *Black Hawk,* which was trying to get the *Osage* afloat. The *Hastings* quickly cast off from the landing when the Confederates opened fire. The gunboat *Lexington* dropped down from a short distance upstream and opened on the enemy battery. The *Rob Roy* joined in with the four heavy Parrott guns mounted on her bow, and a section of the 1st Missouri Artillery on the *Emerald* contributed its fire.[21] The battle continued for about two hours, with Green's men delivering what Commander Thomas O. Selfridge called "the heaviest and most concentrated fire of musketry that I have ever witnessed." [22] The Southern battery was roughly handled, but the greatest loss was sustained when the able and gallant Green was killed by a discharge of canister. About six or shortly after, the Confederates, doubtless greatly discouraged by Green's death, withdrew from the contest. Both sides believed that the other had suffered terribly. The Federals estimated that the enemy had lost from 200 to 500 in killed and wounded.[23] In his memoirs Taylor remarked that

> the enemy's loss, supposed by our people to have been immense, was officially reported as seven on the gunboats and fifty on the transports. *Per contra,* the enemy believed that our loss was stupendous; whereas we had scarcely a casualty except the death of General Green, an irreparable one. No Confederate went aboard the fleet and no Fed-

[20] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 381, 570–71.
[21] *Ibid.,* pp. 381, 385, 388; *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 789.
[22] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 49.
[23] *Ibid.,* pp. 49, 55.

eral came ashore; so there was a fine field of slaughter in which the imagination of both sides could disport itself.[24]

After the fight at Blair's Landing the boats continued down the river until 1 A.M. on the 13th, when they tied up until shortly after daybreak. The voyage on the 13th was a hectic one too. The *John Warner* got aground and caused a lengthy delay. Then Brigadier General St. John R. Liddell's artillery opened an annoying fire from the north bank, but Selfridge managed to drive Liddell off with the *Osage's* great guns before any serious damage was done. Next a broken rudder forced the *Clara Bell* to take the *Rob Roy* in tow, while the *Warner* stubbornly resisted all efforts to get her afloat. Then T. Kilby Smith sent downstream all but three of his boats that were able to move under their own power or could be towed, while with the others he labored to drag the *Warner* into deeper water. Finally at daylight on the 14th he sent down all his boats, leaving the *Warner* to be protected by the *Fort Hindman.*[25]

In the meantime at Grand Ecore there was increasing anxiety on the part of A. J. Smith and his officers as to the fate of Kilby Smith's division. Firing had been heard from upstream in the direction of Campti, about twelve miles northwest of Grand Ecore. Were the fleet and transports being overpowered by the enemy? On the 13th Colonel Shaw went to A. J. Smith to secure permission to cross the Red and march to the aid of the beleaguered Federals. Using "strong, emphatic language as to General Banks' lack of military ability," Smith told Shaw that he had no authority to send him, and that he had been unable to get Banks's permission to go. Shaw said he would like to go without permission, and as he received no contrary orders, he took his brigade and started out.[26] That same after-

[24] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 177–78.
[25] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 382.
[26] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 243.

noon Porter steamed down to Grand Ecore and told Banks that infantry was required at Campti to protect the boats that were unable to come down immediately. As a result, when Banks met Shaw as he was crossing the pontoon bridge and found out where he was going, he ordered A. J. Smith to take another brigade and go with Shaw. Smith's men got to Campti after nightfall on the 13th and cleared the area of Confederates, and when Kilby Smith arrived the next morning, he found the place in friendly hands. The *Fort Hindman* and the *Warner,* which had been floated at last, came down soon afterward.[27] By the 15th all the boats were comparatively safe at Grand Ecore, although they were much the worse for wear. A Union soldier who saw them come in noted in his diary that "the sides of some of the transports are half shot away, and their smoke-stacks look like huge pepper boxes." [28]

In spite of its abortive outcome, the expedition to Loggy Bayou reflected much credit on both Porter and Kilby Smith, and on those they commanded. All things considered, casualties were remarkably light in view of the almost continual harassment to which the Federals were subjected. Extraordinary navigational difficulties were overcome without the loss of a single vessel—in itself a noteworthy achievement. In the last analysis it was the grit and pertinacity of veteran soldiers and sailors that were primarily responsible for the fleet's safe return to Grand Ecore.

Banks's first concern on reaching Grand Ecore was to provide for the security of his army against any further attacks by Taylor, whom he now believed to have 25,000 men.[29] As early as the evening of April 9, the date of the battle of Pleasant Hill,

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 243; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 310, 382.
[28] Pellet, *114th New York,* p. 222.
[29] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 186.

General Stone had written to Grover at Alexandria that the enemy had been "perfectly repulsed at all points," but nevertheless directing Grover to bring his command to Grand Ecore as quickly as possible, an order peremptorily repeated on the 11th. On the same day a dispatch was sent to Major General John A. McClernand directing him to bring all but 2000 infantry from Pass Cavallo, Texas, and take command of the troops of the 13th Corps then with Banks.[30]

During the next several days Grover's men embarked on transports and steamed up the river. It was anything but a dull trip, for showers of musket balls from Confederate skirmishers fell on the boats at the most unexpected times. Even though there were a few casualties, the frantic scrambles to get below decks when this happened struck the Union soldiers as extremely comical. There was the time, for example, when the sergeant jumped through the top of a covered telegraph wagon in his haste to find shelter; nothing, of course, pleased private soldiers more than to see their officers or noncoms in ridiculous situations.[31] Upon arriving at Grand Ecore, the reinforcements found the army greatly depressed. Particularly dissatisfied were the Western troops, who blamed the recent reverses on the Eastern generals, especially "Mr. Banks," as they called him. Such things would never have happened if Grant had been in command, they said.[32]

A semicircular line of entrenchments was rapidly erected around Grand Ecore. Large trees, plentiful in the vicinity, were felled along the line, the boles being used to construct log

[30] *Ibid.,* Part iii, 128; LIII, 592.

[31] George W. Powers, *The Story of the Thirty-Eighth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteers* (Cambridge, 1866), pp. 130–32; Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* p. 189; Tiemann, *159th New York,* p. 69; George G. Smith, *Leaves from a Soldier's Diary* (Putnam, Conn., 1906), p. 94.

[32] Hoffman, *Camp, Court and Siege,* p. 97; Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* p. 190; Van Alstyne, *Diary,* p. 306; Lufkin, *13th Maine,* p. 87; Powers, *38th Massachusetts,* p. 133.

breastworks, and the tops as abatis. Cameron's division of the 13th Corps was engaged in this work one day out on the Pleasant Hill road when General Franklin rode by.

"You don't need any protection," he remarked. "We can whip them easily here."

The rout at Sabine Crossroads was still fresh in the memories of these men, however, and one of them replied, "We have been defeated once, and we think we will look out for ourselves." [33] It was difficult for even a major general to answer that.

Soon after his return to Grand Ecore, Banks began what must have been the unpleasant task of reporting to Grant the progress of the expedition. He gave the general-in-chief a rather detailed résumé of events up to the withdrawal to the river, laying heavy emphasis on the Confederates' repulses at Pleasant Grove and Pleasant Hill, explaining his retreat as forced by a lack of water and supplies, and in general putting things in as good a light as he could, though not without straining the facts somewhat. So far, he told Grant, the campaign had

> already developed several facts of great importance. First. The enemy regards the possession of Shreveport as a point vital to the existence of the trans-Mississippi army, and will fight to maintain its possession with all their forces and with great desperation. Second. It has changed their operations from an offensive to a defensive character. It is unquestionable that they had intended to make an invasion of Missouri, which they hoped would have disturbed the arrangement of troops east of the Mississippi. . . . Third. The co-operation of Steele, upon the line on which he is now moving, renders us no assistance whatever. . . . Fourth. The low stage of water in Red River deprives us substantially of the assistance of the gunboats, leaving us to depend entirely upon the strength of our land forces, with

[33] Williams, *56th Ohio,* p. 70; also D. H. Hanaburgh, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Regiment, New York Volunteers* (Pokeepsie [*sic*], 1894), p. 101; Lufkin, *13th Maine,* p. 87; Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* p. 192; Powers, *38th Massachusetts,* p. 133.

very little aid even of water transportation above the point now occupied.

These considerations together show that the campaign is of greater importance than was generally anticipated at its commencement. . . .[34]

The destruction of Kirby Smith's army would relieve the navigation of the Mississippi from all danger, he concluded, and would prevent the invasion of Arkansas and Missouri.

In a dispatch of April 13 Banks told Grant flatly that the advance on Shreveport would be resumed immediately "upon a line differing somewhat from that adopted first and rendering the column less dependent upon a river proverbially as treacherous as the enemies we fight." [35] For a short time, at least, Banks seems to have seriously considered moving forward again.[36] But a few days later he was writing Grant that he would have to be reinforced first. Steele should be sent down to join him at Grand Ecore; he was assured by Governor Willard P. Hall of Missouri, who was with the expedition, that 10,000 men could be spared from Missouri and Kansas.[37] Clearly his desire to plunge once more into that forbidding pine forest was waning. Very shortly it disappeared altogether.

To add further to Banks's worries, Brigadier General John M. Corse arrived at headquarters with messages from Sherman to Banks and A. J. Smith informing them that the period for which the latter's command had been lent had now expired, and ordering the detachments of the 16th and 17th Corps to return forthwith to Vicksburg.[38] As far as Banks was concerned, the withdrawal of Smith was almost the equivalent of total disaster. The army had suffered heavy casualties, and the cavalry and 13th Corps had not yet recovered from the rout of April 8. With Smith's hard-fighting veterans gone he would

[34] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 187–88 (April 17, 1864).
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 185.
[36] Cf. *Com. Con. War*, p. 35.
[37] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 188 (Banks to Grant, April 17, 1864).
[38] *Ibid.*, Part iii, 24; XXXII, Part iii, 242.

have less than 20,000 men with which to confront the rebel hosts, as he conceived them. Moreover, the river had fallen so low that the navy would not be able to pass the falls at Alexandria and would need the protection of the army. As a consequence of these considerations, Banks formally countermanded Sherman's orders and directed Smith to remain with the army, at the same time writing Sherman to tell him of his decision and his reasons for it.[39] Admiral Porter was, for once, in emphatic agreement with Banks. Some of his boats were having difficulty in crossing the bar at Grand Ecore, and the unwieldy *Eastport* was sitting on the bottom of the river below the town, having been sunk by a Confederate torpedo.[40] Porter needed time to get his boats over the bar and to raise the *Eastport*. The safety of the army and the fleet, he assured Sherman in a letter of April 14, depended on A. J. Smith's staying with Banks. "His is the only part of the army not demoralized," said the admiral with characteristic exaggeration, "and if he has to leave there would be a most disastrous retreat." [41] Even after he knew Smith was to stay, Porter was in continual fear lest Banks pull up stakes and leave him to face the enemy alone.[42]

One of the results of the recent battles was a determination on Banks's part to make some changes in command. First of all, Charles P. Stone, his chief of staff, was to be relieved. Stone had been energetic and gallant in the discharge of his duties at Sabine Crossroads and Pleasant Hill, although he had undoubtedly made some mistakes. There was more behind his removal than that, however. For some time relations between Stone and Banks had not been of the best. Only last fall he had tendered his resignation because of some remarks Banks had

39 *Ibid.*, XXXIV, Part iii, 175, 265–66.

40 *Ibid.*, Part i, 499, 505; *O. R. N.*, XXVI, 62, 68–69.

41 *O. R. N.*, XXVI, 56.

42 Cf. *Com. Con. War*, p. 278. To do him justice, there is nothing to indicate that Banks ever intended to abandon the navy. See *O. R. N.*, XXVI, 64.

made concerning him, and at first Banks had accepted it, but for some reason final action was never taken and Stone retained his position. Banks felt that now was a good time to get rid of Stone, whom he described to his wife as a "very weak" man. But there were many who felt that the major general commanding was making a scapegoat of his chief of staff. By an odd coincidence, on April 16, immediately after Stone's removal, an order came from the War Department relieving Stone from duty, stripping him of his volunteer rank of brigadier general, and ordering him to go to Cairo, Illinois, and from there report to the adjutant general. "For this action," remarked the historian of the 19th Corps, "neither cause nor occasion has ever been made known." [43] Stone was in fact a marked man. In the Army of the Potomac he had been a McClellan supporter, a breed with an exceedingly high official mortality rate, and the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War had pilloried him as being responsible for the Ball's Bluff disaster. Imprisoned for six months without being charged or being brought to trial, he was finally allowed to vindicate himself before the committee early in 1863, and was then assigned to duty in the Department of the Gulf. After being relieved from duty with Banks, he was eventually reassigned to the Army of the Potomac, but, bitter and disillusioned, he left the army late in 1864. Several years after the war he became chief of staff for the Egyptian army.[44]

Besides Stone, Albert Lee was relieved from command of the cavalry division and sent back to New Orleans, accompanied by "Gold Lace" Dudley, who was also relieved, "for the

[43] Irwin, *19th Corps,* p. 327; also Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 230; Stone to Banks, Sept. 23; Banks to Stanton, Sept. 26, 1863; Banks to his wife, April 17, 1864, Banks Papers.

[44] Williams, *Lincoln and the Radicals,* pp. 46–47; Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 138; Dumas Malone, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography* (New York, 1928–44), XVIII, 72; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* II, 123–24.

purpose of reorganizing the cavalry of the department," as Field Order No. 23 put it. Before the month was out, both men were removed from all command in the cavalry.[45] Lee's division was placed under the direction of Arnold, chief of artillery. Banks relieved Lee, he said,

> because the general officers expressed to me so positively their want of confidence in the organization and condition of the cavalry, and advised so earnestly a change. That was an act which I afterwards regretted. . . . I have no complaint to make of General Lee's general conduct. He was active, willing, and brave, and suffered, more or less unjustly, as all of us did, for being connected with that affair.[46]

Banks could have applied his last remark to Stone with equal justice, and it seems unfortunate that he did not take the opportunity to do so. Probably to no one's surprise, Banks selected as his new chief of staff William Dwight, of the cotton-hunting Dwights.[47] Possibly it was felt that a community of interests would make for better personal relations.

During its stay at Grand Ecore the Federal army presented the peculiar spectacle of a force of at least 25,000 men hemmed in by an enemy who could muster scarcely 5000 effectives. That was all Taylor had, now that Kirby Smith had taken Walker's and Churchill's divisions to Arkansas to fight Steele. His cavalry, recently reinforced by a small brigade of Texas troopers commanded by Brigadier General William Steele, was now led by Major General John A. Wharton, a Texan who had won a substantial reputation for himself in the Army of Tennessee. The rest of Taylor's "army," which was no larger than the average Confederate infantry division at that stage of the war, consisted of Polignac's infantry, now number-

45 *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 211, 294, 259.
46 *Com. Con. War,* p. 17.
47 *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 193.

ing less than 2000 effectives.[48] Taylor himself, after being told by Kirby Smith that he was not to accompany the infantry to Arkansas,[49] remained in Shreveport several days and wrote his official report of the campaign to date. He completed it on April 18 and on the following day he left for the front, where he arrived on the 22d.[50]

On the same day that Taylor left Shreveport, Banks decided that it was time to go back to Alexandria. The river was still falling, and Admiral Porter, with his boats grating and bouncing on the bottom, gave it as his positive opinion "unequivocally expressed," as Banks said, that no further advance should be undertaken by either the army or the navy until there was plenty of water in the Red.[51] Banks was under positive orders from Grant to return A. J. Smith's men if it appeared that Shreveport could not be taken before the end of April, even if this entailed the abandonment of the expedition.[52] Since he was unwilling to advance without the help of the navy and water transportation, there was nothing left to do now but turn back and give up the campaign.

Consequently, on April 19 A. J. Smith was ordered to take his entire command, with wagons loaded and all preparations made for field duty, and occupy Natchitoches as a *point de résistance* to cover the retreat of the army. Smith's divisions were in Natchitoches on the 20th, and at five o'clock on the afternoon of the 21st, a clear, quiet spring day, the retreat began. In the lead were the reinforcements from Grover's di-

[48] On April 18, 1864, Taylor gives the strength of Polignac's division as "scarcely 2000 bayonets" (*ibid.*, Part i, 572). In his memoirs he described it as consisting of 1200 "muskets" (*Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 180; also pp. 181–82). In view of the very heavy losses the division suffered on the 8th and 9th, 1200 may be correct.

[49] See above, pp. 182–83.

[50] Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas,* p. 538; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 580.

[51] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 190.

[52] See above, pp. 105–106.

vision, four regiments[53] commanded by Brigadier General Henry Birge, with Benedict's (now Fessenden's) brigade of Emory's division attached. Three brigades of cavalry screened the front and flank of the column. Following Birge came the trains, then the rest of Emory's division, and next the 13th Corps. Bringing up the rear was A. J. Smith's command, to which Lucas's brigade of cavalry was attached.[54] The column was long, the road dusty, and darkness fell before all of the army was in motion. Then the soldiers made their way by the light of fires kindled by the cavalry, and by the glare from burning homes and other buildings. It was past 3 A.M. when the last Federals left Grand Ecore, and the few houses there went up in smoke along with immense quantities of military stores that Banks could not carry with him.[55]

The route of the Federal army can be followed in part in Figure 10, seen on page 227. As shown there, Cane River, once the main channel of the Red, diverged to the west of the latter a few miles below Grand Ecore. After taking a wandering course through the countryside, it rejoined the Red about thirty air-line miles south of Grand Ecore. The road that Banks followed traversed the length of the island formed by the two streams and crossed Cane River again at Monett's Ferry, a forty-mile march from Grand Ecore. Word came in to Union headquarters that the Confederates were shifting troops down to Monett's with the intention of cutting off the army's retreat.[56] Of course the retreat then became a race for Monett's, and as a result this march from Grand Ecore was the severest of the campaign for Banks's men. Water was scarce

[53] 13th Conn., 38th Mass., 1st La., 128th N. Y.

[54] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 310, 428; Part iii, 222, 244; Irwin, *19th Corps*, p. 328; Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, p. 192; undated memorandum by Lt. William Simpson, Banks Papers.

[55] Powers, *38th Massachusetts*, pp. 136–37; Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, p. 192; Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas*, p. 539.

[56] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 190.

along the road, which the Confederates had obstructed in many places by felling trees. Men were left along the way completely exhausted; others fell asleep marching, as officers did astride their horses.[57] Matters were even worse when the sun rose the next day. Still the army marched on with hardly a breathing spell. Some of the men had only two hours' rest in twenty-three. Scores dropped out in the dust and heat. Close on the Federals heels came Wharton with Steele's Texans, capturing many prisoners as they swept through Natchitoches. Time after time the Union rear guard was forced to come into line of battle and hold off the pursuers.[58] The retreat was perilously close to becoming a headlong flight.

As it marched, the Army of the Gulf left behind it a smoldering wasteland. So far as the available evidence indicates, there was almost complete and total destruction of all property within reach of the column. Governor Lubbock of Texas was a member of Wharton's staff and an eyewitness: "The demoralized enemy in their retreat left no houses or fences, stock or supplies, behind them. Everything of any possible value was taken or destroyed." [59] According to Henry Watkins Allen, Governor of Confederate Louisiana,

> From Mansfield to the Mississippi River the track of the spoiler was one scene of desolation. . . . You can travel for miles, in many portions of Louisiana, through a once thickly-settled country, and not see a man, nor a woman, nor a child, nor a four-footed beast. The farmhouses have been burned. The plantations deserted. . . . A painful melancholy, a death-like silence, broods over the land, and desolation reigns supreme.[60]

The stellar role in this drama was played by the troops of

[57] Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* p. 193; Hanaburgh, *128th New York,* p. 103; Williams, *56th Ohio,* p. 71; Lufkin, *13th Maine,* pp. 87–88.

[58] Clark, *116th New York,* p. 167; Beecher, *114th New York,* p. 331; Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas,* p. 540.

[59] Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas,* p. 540.

[60] Dorsey, *Allen,* pp. 278–79.

A. J. Smith. They had not long ago returned from the Meridian expedition, in the course of which they made "a swath of desolation fifty miles broad across the State of Mississippi which the present generation will not forget," to use Sherman's succinct phraseology.[61] General T. Kilby Smith clearly described the temper of these troops in a letter written to his mother early in the present campaign. "The inhabitants here about are pretty tolerably frightened," he said; "our Western troops are tired of shilly shally, and this year they will deal their blows very heavily. Past kindnesses and forbearance has [*sic*] not been appreciated or understood; frequently ridiculed. The people now will be terribly scourged." [62] Terribly scourged they were. The scene made an unforgettable impression on those who saw it. Some recorded their thoughts, among them a historian of the 114th New York.

> Destruction and desolation followed on the trail of the retreating column. At night, the burning buildings mark our pathway. As far as the eye can reach, we see in front new fires breaking out, and in the rear the dying embers tell the tale of war. Hardly a building is left unharmed. * * * The wanton and useless destruction of property has well earned [A. J. Smith's] command a lasting disgrace. . . . In order that the stigma of rendering houseless and homeless innocent women and children, may not rest upon us, be it recorded that not only the Commander of the army, but our Division and Brigade commanders have issued orders reprobating it, and threatening offenders with instant death.[63]

A soldier of the 81st Illinois, in T. Kilby Smith's division, recorded that he and his comrades burned every building along their route during the march of April 22. In fact, "on the whole of this march from Natchitoches, nearly every building

[61] Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman, Fighting Prophet* (New York, 1932), p. 333.

[62] Smith, *T. Kilby Smith,* p. 362 (letter of Mar. 24, 1864).

[63] Pellet, *114th New York,* pp. 225, 229. Presumably the brigade and division commanders referred to were those of the 19th Corps, of which the 114th New York was a part.

was burned," this warrior recalled.[64] Every kind of domestic animal—cows, calves, hogs, horses, mules—lay dead along the road. Barns, smokehouses, corn cribs, chicken houses, and cotton gins were destroyed as well as dwellings. Not even the cabins of the Negroes escaped the torch.[65] Natchitoches, whose beauty and charm had impressed many of the invaders, was fired in several places. Wharton's cavalry arrived in time to save the town, and Cloutierville had a similar escape, but these were exceptions.[66]

Bitter indeed were Taylor's thoughts as he followed the track of the Northern army. Louisiana was his state; he had used his small resources as best he could to defend her people. Now all about him lay the pitiful evidence of his failure. "In pursuit," he said, "we passed the smoking ruins of homesteads, by which stood weeping women and children. Time for the removal of the most necessary articles of furniture had been refused. It was difficult to restrain one's inclination to punish the ruffians engaged in this work; but they asserted, and doubtless with truth, that they were acting under orders." [67] Citizens told Taylor that A. J. Smith's soldiers were the men responsible, and that Banks and the Eastern troops had tried to protect the civilian population from such acts.[68]

By 2:30 A.M. on April 22 the van of Banks's army was bivouacked twenty miles southeast of Grand Ecore on the east bank of Cane River. By eleven that morning the rest of the column had closed up well and the march was resumed. That night the leading units camped three miles south of Cloutierville,[69] but not before it was learned that there were enemy

[64] Newsome, *Experience in the War,* pp. 134–35, 139.

[65] Jefferson D. Bragg, *Louisiana in the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge, 1941), p. 171; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 581.

[66] Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas,* p. 540; Pellet, *114th New York,* p. 229; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 581.

[67] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 193.

[68] *Ibid.,* p. 194.

[69] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 439.

troops near Monett's Ferry. At midnight Emory received orders from Banks to move forward with all of the army except the rear guard and drive the Confederates from their position at the crossing of Cane River. Smith was also asked to dispatch a strong brigade to assist Emory, but "Whitey" sent back word that he could not spare any men: Taylor was pressing him too closely. At 4:30 A.M. on the 23d, the cavalry, followed by Emory's division, advanced toward the ferry and soon encountered Southern skirmishers. Arnold's troopers pressed forward and drove them over the river. The Federals could now see clearly that the main enemy position, studded with artillery, was on the series of wooded bluffs overlooking the south bank of the Cane.[70]

The force confronting Emory consisted of some 1600 cavalry and four batteries, the whole detachment commanded by General Bee. Both Taylor and Wharton had impressed upon Bee the importance of holding Monett's. With Bee in front of the Union army, Wharton in its rear, Liddell covering the crossing of the Red at the mouth of Cane River, and Polignac blocking the road from Cloutierville, Taylor believed his forces were capable of giving the enemy serious trouble.[71] Taylor's strategy is illustrated by the sketch on the following page.

When the Union horsemen came out on to open ground opposite the ferry they were fired upon by Southern guns across the river. Thereupon Emory withdrew all but the dismounted men and threw forward a line of infantry skirmishers. The position was obviously too strong to approach frontally, except as a last resort. Colonel E. J. Davis was told to take his brigade of cavalry and move off to the left to see if the river could be crossed below the enemy position.[72] Banks

[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 262, 394–95, 460; Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, p. 164.

[71] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 580; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 180.

[72] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 262, 460. Davis commanded the Fourth Brigade, formerly "Gold Lace" Dudley's.

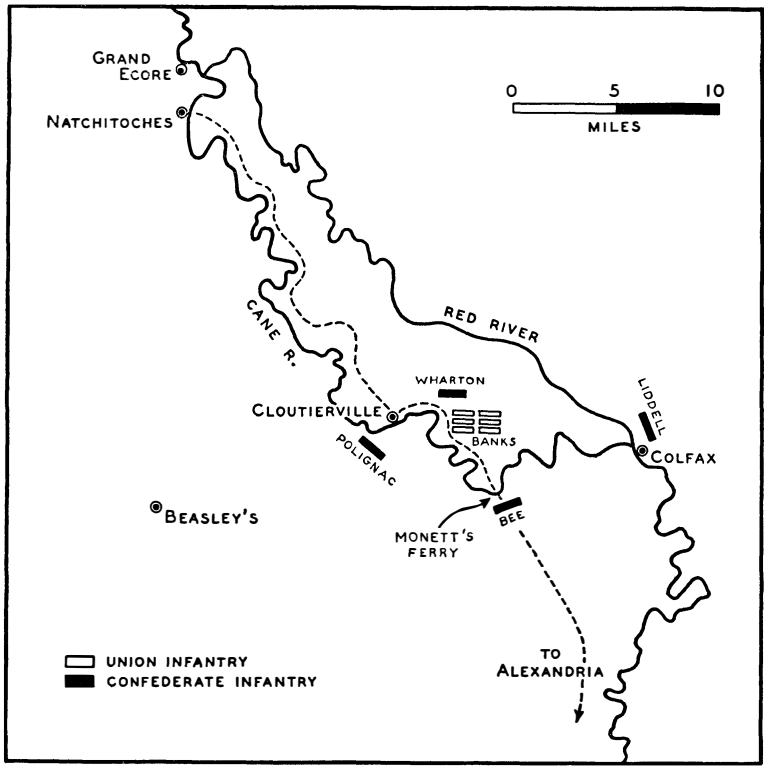


FIGURE 10. The island formed by the Cane and Red Rivers, and Taylor's attempted encirclement of the Union army at Monett's Ferry, April 23

gave his chief engineer officer the same assignment. Meanwhile A. J. Smith was being very hard-pressed by Wharton's cavalry and Franklin received word that the rear guard might not be able to hold its ground.[73]

When word came in to headquarters that there was no crossing below the ferry, the Federals were compelled to place all their reliance on a flanking movement from their right.

[73] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 15, 34–35.

This was led by Birge, who took his troops, Fessenden's brigade, and the survivors of the 13th Corps.[74] The crossing took place about two miles above the ferry at a ford pointed out to the Federals by a Negro. The first unit to wade through the waist-deep river was the 13th Connecticut. Some of the noncommissioned officers of the regiment tried to paddle over in a canoe, as more befitting the dignity of their grade, but managed only to capsize in midstream, much to the satisfaction of the rank and file.[75]

Once across, the Federals began a long detour to the south and southeast, mostly through dry, wooded country that changed into marshland in wetter weather. The leading troops advanced in line, with flankers and skirmishers out, sometimes passing into a flank movement by the right of companies when some obstacle was encountered and then coming into line again. Finally they emerged from the woods into a field, and then into a tract of plowed ground. Next they climbed a wooded ridge by a winding path until the skirmishers came into contact with enemy pickets. The next Confederate position could be seen a quarter of a mile to the east, with a small area of cleared ground intervening on the left.[76] See the sketch on the opposite page.

Birge left the plan of attack to Fessenden, who placed his own brigade on the right and Birge's regiments on the left; Cameron was in reserve. Ordering the men to hold their fire and drive home the charge with the bayonet, Fessenden gave the word to advance. As the line mounted the crest of the hill, the Confederates—three regiments of cavalry and a battalion of state troops—opened fire with small arms and artillery, and Fessenden was among the first to be wounded. As it descended the hill, the line was slightly disordered when it scrambled

74 *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 262.
75 Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* p. 195; Woods, *96th Ohio,* p. 74.
76 Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* pp. 195–96.

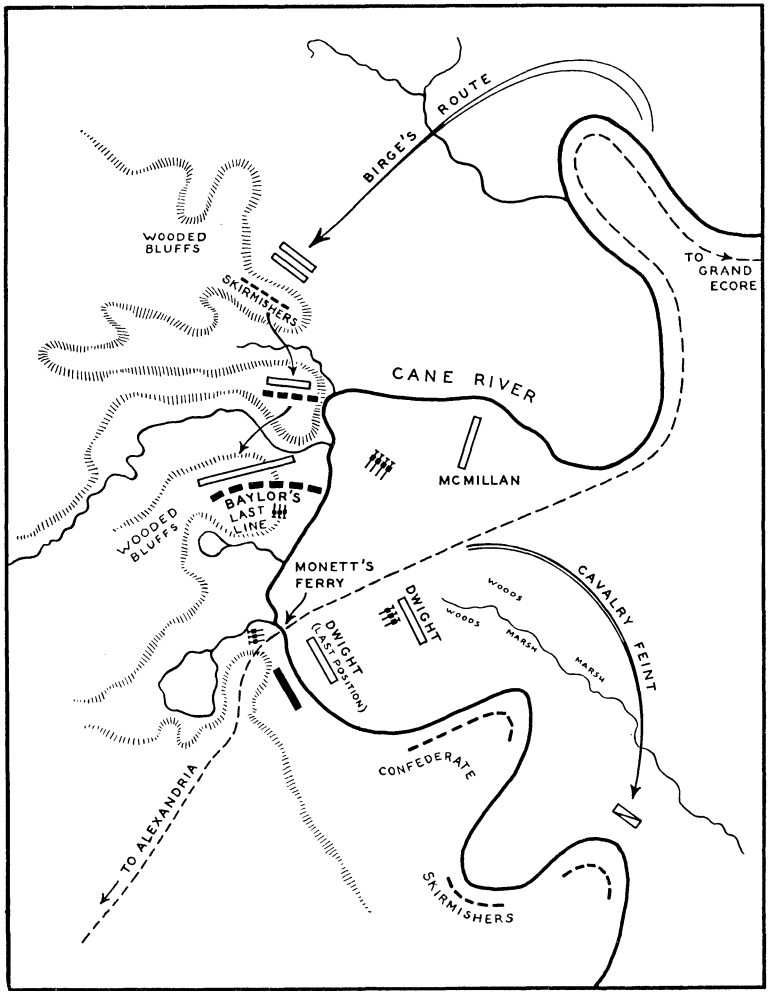


FIGURE 11. Engagement at Monett's Ferry, April 23, 1864

over a fence and across a gully. The left flank was further handicapped by the fact that the south boundary of the open field cut obliquely across the direction of attack, crowding the 1st Louisiana into the right of the 13th Connecticut, forcing the latter to left oblique. At the foot of the ridge where the Confederates were, another fence and gully were passed, and the Federals then went up the slope almost at a run. The enemy quickly withdrew, leaving behind a few dead and wounded.[77]

The Southerners, commanded on this flank by Colonel George W. Baylor, 2d Arizona Cavalry, fell back to a second line hidden behind a brush-grown fencerow. Baylor brought up his own and Isham Chisum's regiments from a point near the ferry and put them on the right of his line, which now extended to Cane River.[78] He then asked Bee for two more regiments to fill a gap between his left and a lake that would have then protected his line from attack in that direction, but these reinforcements were not forthcoming.[79]

The Union line had been disarranged by the advance over rough ground, and a pause was made to re-form the troops and give the rear regiments a chance to come up. Then they went forward again, into a field that fronted Baylor's position. At this moment General Birge and a small detachment of mounted men went on ahead to reconnoiter. The infantry was in the act of crossing a gully through which ran a small stream when the line was struck without warning by a stunning blast of musketry and artillery fire. The Federals had been ambushed; they had not even seen the enemy. For a few moments the front line—the 13th Connecticut and 1st Louisiana—was paralyzed. Then the men gathered their courage, leaped

[77] *Ibid.*, pp. 196–97; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 262, 275, 434, 613; Banks to his wife [April 26, 1864?], Banks Papers.

[78] This was the last line defended by Baylor.

[79] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 619.

a fence, and pushed ahead under a withering fire. But just then the horsemen who had gone in advance came galloping back in headlong flight, mounts and riders falling, and the hatless Birge swept along with the mob. These riders burst through the middle of the Union line. This second surprise badly unnerved the infantry. Men fell flat on the ground, and others started to go to the rear. Above the noise and uproar could be heard the voice of Colonel William Fiske, 1st Louisiana, shouting "Stand up! For God's sake, stand up like men! Stand up and do your duty like men." [80] The two leading regiments rallied to a certain extent and took cover in a ravine filled with thick undergrowth, through which the Miniés buzzed like a swarm of angry bees.[81]

Emory watched Birge's progress from across the river, making demonstrations with his troops opposite the ferry as if preparing for an assault. He also directed the placement of a battery to fire on the right of Baylor's line at a range of 1000 yards in order to prevent the Confederate artillery from being used against Birge. The battery got into position with some difficulty and opened on the enemy just after Birge was repulsed. Baylor was then compelled to order his guns to stop firing, and as he did so he sent back a request that the artillery near the ferry turn its attention to silencing this Federal battery.[82] But by this time General Bee had come to the conclusion that the battle had been lost. Word had come in that the enemy was pressing the right flank, although actually no Federals had crossed the river there. Besides that, there was a strong infantry force in a threatening posture opposite the ferry. "The critical moment had come," wrote Bee in his report; "the position turned on both flanks, and a large force close in front ready

[80] Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, pp. 198–99; also *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 434.

[81] Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, pp. 199–200.

[82] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 396, 407, 620. Baylor estimated the range of the Federal Battery at 500 yards.

to spring on the center." [83] So instead of receiving artillery support, Baylor was told to extricate himself from his position as best he could. He then skillfully withdrew his regiments and joined the rest of Bee's force in retreat. When the Federals advanced again and climbed up the hill in front of them, they found it bare of enemy troops. Bee fell back toward Beasley's, leaving the road to Alexandria open. Union cavalry rode in pursuit but took the wrong road and accomplished nothing.[84]

While Bee and Birge were engaged, Taylor was making spirited attacks on the enemy rear guard below Cloutierville and succeeded in driving the Federals back some distance. Hearing firing in both front and rear, the men in the middle of the Union army became gloomy and depressed; by the sound of things the Confederates had them surrounded.[85] By suppertime, however, the whole army had probably heard the welcome news that the river crossing had been carried. A pontoon bridge was laid, and soon after dark the troops and wagons began crossing the Cane. At three the next morning Taylor opened on the Union rear with artillery, then moved Wharton's men forward and engaged the enemy in a brisk action that lasted until 2 P.M., when the last of the Federals fell back over the river. Polignac's division joined Taylor soon after the enemy had gone.[86]

Union casualties for the actions of April 23 and 24 probably exceeded 300 killed, wounded, and missing. Of these, two-thirds were sustained by the flanking column.[87] The Confed-

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 611.

[84] *Ibid.*, pp. 460–61, 579, 611.

[85] Clark, *116th New York*, p. 170; Bryner, *47th Illinois*, p. 108; Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, p. 166; Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas*, p. 539.

[86] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 263, 580; Bryner, *47th Illinois*, p. 108; Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, p. 166; Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, p. 201; Scott, *32d Iowa*, pp. 346, 269; Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas*, p. 539.

[87] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 190, 432–35; Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, p. 201; Powers, *38th Massachusetts*, pp. 138–39. The total is an estimate based on incomplete returns. Fessenden's brigade lost 153.

erates lost perhaps half as many; Bee had only 50 casualties in his command.[88]

These statistics, of course, tell the story of a relatively insignificant engagement. Such results were very far indeed from the Cannæ that Taylor had hopes of consummating, and he was greatly disappointed and exasperated that Bee had failed to prevent the enemy from crossing the river. In conception Taylor's plan was remarkably bold and sweeping. It was not every commander who would dare to divide his force in several parts in an attempt to surround an enemy with four times his numbers. His hopefulness was predicated at least in part on what he believed to be the demoralized condition of Banks's army, and he doubtless expected that this condition would become even more pronounced when the Federals found themselves hemmed in on all sides. But by giving way, Bee had uncorked the bottle, to borrow a metaphor from Grant. For this he was censured and later removed by Taylor, who at the same time acknowledged his "great personal gallantry." Believing himself to have been unjustly blamed, Bee later asked for a court of inquiry to investigate his conduct. He was told that this was unnecessary, since Kirby Smith agreed with him that, in view of the odds, it would have been impossible for him to hold the crossing against Banks's troops. Wharton, Bagby, and Major, the last two having been with Bee at Monett's, agreed that he had done everything possible.[89]

Bee, however, cannot escape serious criticism. He allowed himself to be deceived by the demonstrations on his right and center, as the Federals hoped he would be. With troops to fill out his line to the lake on his left, and with better artillery support, Baylor could probably have held off Birge for the rest of the day. These troops could have been readily forth-

[88] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 580, 611. The Federals burned a number of vehicles; Bee lost one artillery wagon.

[89] *Ibid.*, pp. 581, 590, 611–15; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 182.

coming if Bee had not been deceived by the feints against his center and right, and if he had not unnecessarily weakened himself by sending an entire brigade to Beasley's, over twenty miles away, to guard his supplies. There also seems to have been no attempt to throw up breastworks or otherwise increase the natural strength of the position.[90]

With all due weight given to these errors, it seems clear that even if Bee had conducted a letter-perfect defense, the Federals would have been able to force a crossing, probably on the afternoon of the 24th. Taylor's scheme of encirclement was too grand for his resources in men. If, on the other hand, he had then had with him the three infantry divisions that Kirby Smith took from him to use in Arkansas, momentous results might well have been achieved.[91]

Once across Cane River the Union army resumed the march for Alexandria at a killing pace, not stopping until long after dark on the 24th. As usual the path of the troops "was lit up at night with the conflagration of burning buildings burnt by our stragglers."[92] According to a Union cavalryman, "the country was in flames. Smith's men were burning on every hand. Dense clouds of smoke could be seen by the rear guard as they fell back. This was, indeed, 'war's foul desolation.' From Cane River to Alexandria the country was in ruins. It was a picture, whose equal the men had never seen before."[93] When Banks and his staff stopped for the night at Judge Boyce's plantation, four companies of the 3d Massachusetts were assigned to guard the house. One could not be too careful.

The march was kept up all the next day. It was not until mid-afternoon that the first of the footsore Federals staggered into

[90] Cf. *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 580.
[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 541–42, 581; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, pp. 189–90.
[92] Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, p. 201.
[93] Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, p. 166.

Alexandria; the rear of the column did not arrive until late on the 26th. A. J. Smith received an ovation as he rode to the head of the column; he had been the army's hero ever since his counterattack at Pleasant Hill two weeks before.[94] Smith's men, the rear guard, were the last troops to enter the town, accompanied by crowds of contrabands of every age and complexion who had joined the column. "Some were mounted on mules, some had rigged up old mule-carts, and filled them with bags of clothes, iron pots, and babies. . . . One group impressed itself very vividly on the mind of the present writer. A woman with an immense bundle on her head, was leading a mule with a rope halter, walking with as stately a tread as ever did Cleopatra. Astride of the mule were two little children, the foremost one holding on to a large bundle, the other clasping his companion's waist. The children were neatly dressed, the long fringe on their straw hats shading their faces, whilst their eyes were steadily fixed on their mother; and the complexion of the whole party told of other than African blood." [95]

With a prescience that would have endeared a chief of staff to any general, Dwight had some time previously sent one of his aides to New Orleans with important unofficial instructions, and when the generals reached headquarters, they found ready for them a magnificent dinner well supplied with champagne. Banks and his staff were there, of course, and even Mower and the hard-bitten Smith, whose contempt for Banks evidently did not keep him from drinking his wine. The dinner must have been a success, for one of the guests, Surgeon Homans, recorded that he, Mower, and Smith reached the

[94] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 331; Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, pp. 202–203; Scott, *32d Iowa*, p. 247; Clark, *116th New York*, p. 172; Williams, *56th Ohio*, p. 71; Bryner, *47th Illinois*, p. 108.

[95] Powers, *38th Massachusetts*, pp. 140–41. Flinn, *Campaigning with Banks*, p. 131, appropriated this passage from Powers verbatim, without acknowledgments.

point where they were expressing their admiration and affection for one another. "At length night and somnolence put an end to the feast." [96]

That was an amiable way to end the retreat, but under the circumstances a more appropriate note was perhaps struck by the following order issued on April 27:

> Hdqrs. Nineteenth Army Corps
> and U. S. Forces in West La.
> *Alexandria, La., April 27, 1864.*
>
> The advance of this army in its march from Grand Ecore to this place having been accompanied by indiscriminate marauding and incendiarism, disgraceful to the army of a civilized nation, and no clue having hitherto been found by which the guilty parties can be detected, a reward of $500 is hereby offered for such evidence as will convict the accused of incendiarism before a general court-martial, to be paid to the person furnishing the evidence upon the conviction of the accused.
>
> By order of Major-General Franklin:
>
> Wickham Hoffman
> *Assistant Adjutant-General.*[97]

Lending unnecessary emphasis to this order were the great clouds of smoke rolling up from the countryside north of Alexandria, rising from the burning buildings that dotted the landscape as far as the eye could see.[98]

Over on the river, Admiral Porter was having still more adventures in what was turning out to be the hottest part of his tour of duty on the Western waters. With the help of steam pumps and days of back-breaking work by her crew, the

[96] Homans, *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.,* VIII, 88–89; also James G. Wilson, "The Red River Dam, with comments on the Red River Campaign," in James G. Wilson and Titus M. Coan, eds., *Personal Recollections of the War of the Rebellion. Addresses Delivered before the New York Commandery of the Loyal Legion* (New York, 1911), p. 91.

[97] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 307.

[98] Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry,* p. 169.

Eastport was finally floated on April 21. That same day she was taken in tow by the transport *Champion No. 5,* accompanied by several other vessels. Porter brought up the rear in the *Cricket,* towing the *Eastport's* guns on a flat behind him.[99]

On the following evening the *Eastport* grounded on a bar and the next day was spent in getting her off. She had not gone more than four or five miles farther when she grounded again. This was discouraging, of course, but the captain of the *Eastport,* Lieutenant Commander S. Ledyard Phelps, was determined not to lose his vessel. He worked a day and a half to free her, only to find himself stranded again before he had gone two miles. Here, near Montgomery, two more days were spent heaving, hauling, and twisting the *Eastport* over the bottom of a three-mile stretch of the Red. Then at last on April 26 she stuck tight. Pilots went downstream, made soundings, and reported to Phelps and the admiral that there was just not enough water in the river to float a vessel with so deep a draft. Porter had felt for some time that they would end by having to blow up the unwieldy boat to prevent her capture, but so far he had yielded against his better judgment to Phelps's earnest desire to save his command.[100] Now she was irretrievably lodged on a bed of rocks and logs, and, to make matters more urgent, Confederate sharpshooters had appeared and were firing on the boats. Some of them even made an unsuccessful attempt to board the *Cricket.* Tentative efforts were made to lighten ship by removing the armor plating, but this proved to be impossible under the circumstances. The *Fort Hindman* tried to haul her off and only succeeded in making her more immovable. By now it was early afternoon, and Porter and Phelps gave up at last. By the admiral's order 3000 pounds of powder were distributed through the boat and connected to an electrical detonator. This apparatus failed to work

[99] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 72, 79.
[100] *Ibid.,* p. 79.

properly, and so the magazines were fused with tar, cotton, and other combustibles. Phelps himself applied the match and in accordance with tradition was the last man to leave the vessel. Both Porter and Phelps, indeed, lingered almost too long, and great chunks of the hull narrowly missed their launches when the *Eastport* blew up.[101]

After inspecting the remains of what had been the most powerful ironclad in the Mississippi Squadron, Porter took the remaining five vessels, three tinclads and two transports,[102] and headed down the river to join the rest of the fleet. With the flagship *Cricket* in the lead, about fifteen miles were covered without incident. Then, at a point five miles above the mouth of Cane River, Porter saw a battery of enemy guns on the right bank. Immediately he opened fire with his bow guns. The battery, mounting four field pieces and commanded by Captain Florian Cornay, responded with an accurate and remarkably rapid fire. A detachment of 200 infantry from Polignac's division added Minié balls to the iron shower that began to fall on the *Cricket.*[103] The next few minutes were graphically described by Porter in his report to Gideon Welles:

> The captain [of the *Cricket*] . . . gave orders to stop the engines for the purpose of fighting the battery, and covering the boats astern. I corrected this mistake and got headway on the vessel again, but not soon enough to avoid the pelting shower of shot and shell which the enemy poured into us—every shot going through and through us, clearing all our decks in a moment. Finding the guns not firing rapidly, I stepped on the gun deck to see what was the matter. As I stepped down, the after gun was struck with a shell and disabled, and every man at the gun killed and wounded. At the same moment the crew from the forward gun was swept away by a shell exploding, and the men were wounded in the fire-room, leaving only one man to fire up. I made up a gun's crew from the contrabands,

[101] *Ibid.*, pp. 74, 79, 786; Porter, *Incidents and Anecdotes,* p. 239.

[102] *Cricket, Fort Hindman, Juliet* (gunboats); *Champion No. 3* and *Champion No. 5* (transports, sometimes called pump boats).

[103] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 74, 167, 169, 176, 781–82, 786.

who fought the gun to the last moment. Finding that the engine did not move, I went into the engine room, and found the chief engineer killed, whose place was soon supplied by an assistant. I then went to the pilot house and found that a shot had gone through it and wounded one of the pilots. I took charge of the vessel, and as the battery was a very heavy one I determined to pass it, which was done under the heaviest fire I ever witnessed. I attempted to turn her head upstream to attack with our two bow guns, the only guns left, but as this was impracticable I let her drift down around the point and shelled the enemy's batteries in the rear.[104]

Just about the time the *Cricket* rounded the point a frightful scene took place on board the transport *Champion No. 3.* This boat was loaded with about 175 Negroes taken from the plantations along the river. When a Confederate shell penetrated her boiler the scalding steam killed 100 of those on the boat within a matter of minutes; all but three of the others died of burns during the next twenty-four hours. No mention of the death of these men, women, and children, so needlessly exposed to danger, appears in the admiral's report.[105] Next in line after the *Champion No. 3* were the *Juliet* and the *Champion No. 5,* lashed together. Confederate fire soon cut the *Juliet's* tiller ropes and steam pipe, filling the vessel with a cloud of steam. When this cleared away the captain of the *Juliet* discovered that both boats were facing upstream and that he was being cast adrift by the crew of the *Champion.*

[104] *Ibid.,* pp. 74–75. The number of guns in Cornay's battery has been disputed. Porter said there were eighteen. Pilot William Maitland was taken prisoner and stated that he heard his captors say there were eighteen, a statement which led A. T. Mahan (*The Gulf and Inland Waters* [New York, 1901], pp. 198–200) to accept Porter's figure. Mahan was also influenced because Porter said the *Cricket* was struck thirty-eight times in five minutes. The Confederate reports, however, three in all, dealing with this action say that Cornay had only four guns (two brass 12-pdrs. and two howitzers). It seems quite clear that only one battery was involved, and at this period in the war field batteries were almost always composed of four guns, or at the most six. Eighteen guns in one battery would have been unprecedented. Undoubtedly Porter's estimate of the time the *Cricket* was under fire was too low.

[105] *Ibid.,* pp. 75, 81, 176; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 183–84.

William Maitland, one of the *Juliet's* pilots, courageously jumped aboard the *Champion* and made his way to the deserted pilot house. With Maitland at the wheel a line was made fast to the *Juliet,* and she was towed upstream out of range, Phelps in the *Fort Hindman* covering the retreat.[106]

From his position below the battery Porter witnessed the destruction of the *Champion No. 3* and the repulse of the other boats. After shelling the enemy for a short time, the admiral continued down the river in search of reinforcements. The *Cricket* soon ran aground, involving a delay of several hours, and it was after dark when Porter came up with the *Osage,* which was engaging another enemy battery.[107] By that time he had decided that he would not send this vessel to the assistance of the other boats. The danger of running aground was too great; he wanted no repetition of the *Eastport* incident.

Miles up the river, Phelps and his men worked feverishly during the night to do what they could to repair the worst of the damage sustained by the *Juliet* and *Champion.* Because of the difficulties of navigation, Phelps decided to run the battery in daylight, and at 9 A.M. on the 27th the *Fort Hindman,* with the *Juliet* in tow, followed by the *Champion,* started down the river. When within half a mile of the Confederate guns, the *Juliet's* hull was punctured by a snag, and it was necessary to go back up for repairs. After the leak had been stopped, Phelps again led the way downstream, shelling the woods as he went. When the vessels came within 500 yards, Cornay opened a heavy and accurate fire. The *Juliet's* upper works were riddled, and her machinery badly damaged. Then a shell passed through the *Fort Hindman's* pilot house and carried

[106] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 75, 81, 83.

[107] *Ibid.,* pp. 75, 167, 169, 177. Four guns on De Loach's Bluff commanded by Captain Thomas O. Benton. Earlier in the day the *Lexington* was severely cut up by these guns.

away the tiller ropes. Both vessels were now completely unmanageable. They drifted through the barrage, caroming off the banks, and by good luck cleared the wreck of the *Champion No. 3,* which the Confederates had sunk in the stream to hamper the Federals in passing the battery. They finally drifted out of range without suffering any fatal damage. The *Champion No. 5* was not so fortunate. Deprived of the covering fire of the gunboats, she was disabled and then run up on the left bank, where her crew abandoned her and took to the woods.[108]

This episode cost the navy dearly. Two transports were total losses, and the three surviving tinclads were very badly cut up. The *Cricket* alone was struck thirty-eight times by shot and shell and lost twenty-five killed and wounded—half her complement. The *Juliet* and *Fort Hindman* lost as many more, and although the casualties among the crews of the transports were not reported, they were undoubtedly heavy.[109] The cost to the Confederates, aside from the ammunition expended, was one sharpshooter wounded and one officer killed: Captain Cornay.[110] The navy's defeat sprang from two errors of judgment by Porter: first, when he brought the *Eastport* over the rapids at Alexandria a month before against the advice of two experienced Red River pilots; [111] second, as he admitted himself, staking the safety of five boats against the slim chance that the *Eastport* might be floated down to Alexandria. It was a very disheartening affair, but the admiral's most trying days were still to come.

[108] *Ibid.,* pp. 82–84, 169, 176.
[109] *Ibid.,* p. 76.
[110] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 184.
[111] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 282, 288. Pilots W. W. Withenbury and John M. Martin.

CHAPTER VIII

*

A Pause and Another Retreat

*

THE CAMPAIGN WAS over a month old when Banks returned to Alexandria. As news of what was taking place on the Red River slowly began to trickle through to the East, there was an increasing concern on the part of such officers as Grant, Sherman, and Halleck with regard to the effect that events in the Department of the Gulf might have on military affairs east of the Mississippi. On March 31 Grant had written Banks a letter of instructions containing three specific orders: (1) if Shreveport was captured, turn over its defense and that of the line of the Red River to Steele and the navy; (2) with the exception of the Rio Grande, evacuate all positions captured along the Texas coast; (3) reduce the number of posts along the Mississippi and west of that river sufficiently to make available 25,000 men for operations against Mobile. No time should be lost "in making a demonstration, to be followed by an attack on Mobile." All details and preparations were left to Banks.[1]

It was April 18 by the time Banks received this letter, and the army was entrenched at Grand Ecore.[2] In the meantime

[1] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 11.

[2] Banks mentioned in his report (*ibid.*, p. 206) receiving a dispatch on April 18, although he confused its contents with a later dispatch from Grant dated April 17.

Grant had received Banks's dispatch of April 2, written at Alexandria on the way up the river, mentioning the possibility of pursuing Kirby Smith's forces into Texas after Shreveport had been taken.[3] Grant knew that such a move might prevent Banks from getting back to the Mississippi soon enough to march against Mobile by May 1, the date set for the commencement of all the spring campaigns. This would mean that the Confederate troops commanded by Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk [4] would be available for the defense of Georgia instead of having to protect Mobile. Furthermore, if Mobile were not taken, Sherman would not be able to establish a line of supply from that city to Atlanta via the Alabama River.[5] As a result, Grant decided to send a personal messenger to Banks to amplify and explain his written dispatches. For this assignment he chose Major General David Hunter. In a letter of April 17 Grant instructed Hunter to impress upon Banks the imperative necessity of beginning operations against Mobile at the earliest possible moment with the largest possible army. Hunter carried with him a duplicate of Grant's instructions of March 31 and a new letter to Banks telling him that if he had pursued the Confederates into Texas he must retrace his steps at once and prepare for the Mobile expedition.[6] In the light of recent events on the Red River, these last orders were a rare bit of unintentional irony.

On the next day, April 18, Secretary of War Stanton telegraphed to Brigadier Mason Brayman, commanding at Cairo, asking for the latest news from Banks. Brayman relayed a report from the navy saying that Banks had been checked at

[3] See above, pp. 110–11.

[4] Commanding the Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana.

[5] This supply line would of course be less vulnerable than the railroads stretching from Atlanta to the Ohio River.

[6] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part iii, 190–92. Grant told Banks that he "would much rather the Red River expedition had never been begun than that you should be detained one day after the 1st of May in commencing your movement east of the Mississippi."

Mansfield, then had fallen back to Pleasant Hill and whipped the Confederates. This, together with a newspaper item about Banks's "disaster," Stanton forwarded to Grant. On the 21st Brayman telegraphed to Stanton that General Corse, Sherman's messenger, had arrived in Cairo and reported that Banks had lost 4000 men, sixteen guns, over 200 wagons, and had returned to Grand Ecore in a badly injured condition.[7] Upon receiving these revelations, Grant telegraphed Halleck that in his opinion Banks should be replaced by Major General J. J. Reynolds, then commanding the defenses of New Orleans. Halleck showed this message to President Lincoln, who said only that he must delay acting on it for the present.[8]

On the 25th, as a result of a gloomy report Welles had received from Porter, Grant issued an order directing that A. J. Smith's command should remain with the Army of the Gulf until the naval vessels involved were out of danger.[9] Grant himself had just been handed a letter from New Orleans and an anonymous one from someone in the 13th Corps, both of which were "deplorable accounts of General Banks' mismanagement. His own report[10] and these letters clearly show all his disasters to be attributable to his own incompetency."[11] During the next two days telegraphing continued between Grant's headquarters at Culpeper, Virginia, and the office of Chief of Staff Halleck in Washington. The outcome was that on the 27th Halleck sent an order to Banks directing him to put the troops in the field under the command of the next officer in rank, and then return to New Orleans and carry out previous instructions—presumably with respect to an attack on

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 220, 221, 235, 244. See also Sherman to Grant, April 20, and Corse to Sherman, April 21, 1864, *ibid.*, xxxii, Part iii, 407, 420, 422, 437.

[8] *Ibid.*, xxxiv, Part iii, 252–53 (dated April 22; indorsed by Halleck April 23).

[9] *Ibid.*, pp. 278–79. See also Porter to Welles, April 14, 1864, *O. R. N.*, xxvi, 50–54.

[10] Probably that of April 13 (*O. R.*, xxxiv, Part i, 181–85).

[11] *Ibid.*, Part iii, 278–79 (Grant to Halleck, April 25, 1864).

Mobile.[12] It seems reasonably certain, however, that this order never got through to Banks.[13]

In the meantime Grant had been thinking the whole problem through and he had come to the conclusion that nothing could "be done this spring with troops west of the Mississippi, except on that side." Thus he abandoned the attack on Mobile, at least for the time being. "I think, therefore," he continued in a telegram to Halleck, "it will be better to put the whole of that territory into one military division, under some good officer, and let him work out of present difficulties without reference to previous instructions. All instructions that have been given [heretofore] have been given with the view of getting as many of these troops east of the Mississippi as possible." Halleck agreed that it was probably too late to get Banks's troops across the Mississippi in time to co-operate in the spring campaigns. He asked Grant to define the extent of the new division, who was to command it, and what was to be done with Banks. Grant replied that of the four departmental commanders west of the Mississippi (Major Generals John Pope, Samuel R. Curtis, William S. Rosecrans, and Frederick Steele), excluding Banks, of course, he would prefer to put Steele in charge, were it not for the fact that he could not be spared from his present command. As to the extent of the new division, it should include the Departments of the Gulf, Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri. Then he made a rather startling proposition to Halleck. "If you could go in person and take charge of the Trans-Mississippi division until it is relieved of its present dilemma . . . I believe it would be the best that can be done. I am well aware of the importance of your remaining where you are at this time, and the only question is

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 279, 293–94, 306–307. Franklin was second in command. Grant had reservations about Franklin, but preferred him to Banks.

[13] *Ibid.*, Part i, 474 (concerning sinking of the *City Belle* on May 4; it was carrying "dispatches from Washington to General Banks").

which of the two duties is the most important." But if it proved necessary to choose a commander from west of the Mississippi, Grant favored Steele, with Reynolds to take his place in the Department of Arkansas.[14]

Responding to the flattering suggestion that he take the field, Halleck expressed his willingness to serve wherever Grant and Stanton thought best, but said that in the present state of affairs it would be better for him to stay in Washington.[15] On May 3 he gave Grant a lesson in the art of war as practiced by the Lincoln administration:

> I think the President will consent to the order if you insist upon General Banks' removal as a military necessity, but he will do so very reluctantly, as it would give offense to many of his friends, and would probably be opposed by a portion of his cabinet. Moreover, what could be done with Banks? He has many political friends who would probably demand for him a command equal to the one he now has. The result would probably be the same as in the cases of Rosecrans, Curtis, Sigel, Butler, and Lew. Wallace.[16]

After all, this was an election year. "It seems but little better than murder," Halleck wrote Sherman on the same day, "to give important commands to such men as Banks, Butler, McClernand, Sigel, and Lew. Wallace, and yet it seems impossible to prevent it." [17]

Since it appeared that some time would elapse before any new arrangements for the Trans-Mississippi could be concluded, Grant agreed with Halleck that it would be a good idea to inform Banks that no troops were to be withdrawn from operations on the Red River, and that those operations were to be continued under the senior officer present in the

[14] *Ibid.*, Part iii, 331–32, 357 (Halleck to Grant [two dispatches], April 29; Grant to Halleck, April 29 and 30, 1864).
[15] Badeau, *Grant*, II, 84 (Halleck to Grant, May 2).
[16] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part iii, 331–32 (dated April 29).
[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 332–33.

field until further orders. A copy of these instructions was sent to Steele for his information and guidance.[18]

The days continued to pass and still there was no sign from Lincoln that he was prepared to remove or supersede Banks. The Secretary of War has all your telegrams, Halleck told Grant on May 3, and he believed Lincoln had read them all. Drawing on the experience gained during many hectic months in Washington, Halleck gave his chief another lecture on the political verities:

> General Banks is a personal friend of the President, and has strong political supporters in and out of Congress. There will undoubtedly be a very strong opposition to his being removed or superseded, and I think the President will hesitate to act unless he has a definite request from you to do so, as a military necessity, you designating his superior or superior in command. On receiving such a formal request (not a mere suggestion) I believe, as I wrote you some days ago, he would act immediately. I have no authority for saying this, but give it simply as my own opinion, formed from the last two years' experience, and the reason, I think, is very obvious. To do an act which will give offense to a large number of his political friends the President will require some evidence in a positive form to show the military necessities of that act. In other words he must have something in a definite shape to fall back upon as his justification. You will perceive that the press in New Orleans and in the Eastern States are already beginning to open in General Banks' favor. The administration would be immediately attacked for his removal. Do not understand me as advocating his retention in command. On the contrary, I expressed to the President months ago my own opinion of General Banks' want of military capacity. Whatever order you may ask for on this subject I will do my best to have issued.[19]

It is not known whether Grant made such a formal demand for Banks's removal; nothing of the sort has been found. At all events, four days later, on May 7, Major General Edward

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 357–58 (Halleck to Grant, Grant to Halleck, Halleck to Banks, to Steele, April 30, 1864).

[19] *Ibid.*, pp. 409–10.

R. S. Canby was informed by Halleck that he had been assigned to command the Military Division of West Mississippi and was directed to take charge of all military operations in the Departments of the Gulf and Arkansas. He was given a brief sketch of the origins and purposes of the Red River expedition, and told that the general-in-chief had no confidence in the military ability of General Banks. All troops were to be retained west of the Mississippi, since Grant had deferred his plans for an attack on Mobile. Other than these instructions, Canby was given a very wide discretion and "invested with all the power and authority which the President can confer on you. . . ." [20] Banks retained nominal command of the Department of the Gulf, now a subdivision of Canby's domain, but compared to its former power and prestige, the position had become a very empty one indeed.

Back in Alexandria Banks was of course unaware that the official ax was being sharpened, although his native shrewdness must have told him that the current campaign was not likely to increase his popularity at Washington or anywhere else. On April 27 General Hunter reached Banks's headquarters with Grant's April 17 instructions.[21] It was immediately apparent to everyone concerned that these orders, necessarily written in the dark, so to speak, were completely inapplicable to the state of affairs as they then existed on the Red River. The one great fact that rendered them nugatory was the predicament of the navy. As had been more or less expected for some time, the river had now fallen so low that the gunboats could not go down over the rapids at Alexandria. At the shallowest place the water on the falls was only three feet four inches deep; seven feet was the depth required to get the gunboats below the town and into easy water. So the *Lexing-*

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 491.
[21] See above, p. 243.

ton, Fort Hindman, Osage, Neosho, Mound City, Louisville, Pittsburg, Chillicothe, Carondelet, and *Ozark*—the backbone of the Mississippi Squadron—were trapped.[22] Any further retrograde movement by the army would mean the destruction of these vessels to prevent their capture, a catastrophe that would be a stunning blow to Northern naval prestige and probably would mean the ruin of Porter's professional career.

From the Federals' point of view it was naturally desirable to forestall such an eventuality. But it was also important that a large body of troops not be indefinitely immobilized at Alexandria. There was no way to tell when the river would rise; possibly there would be no rise at all that year. At this point attention was directed to a plan offered by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey of Wisconsin, an engineer officer on Franklin's staff. About three weeks previously Bailey had received information leading him to believe that there would not be enough water at Alexandria to allow the fleet to pass. Like many other men from the logging country, Bailey was familiar with techniques by which water depth in streams could be increased by quickly constructed temporary dams. In this way he had salvaged two steamers during the Port Hudson campaign the previous year. As early as April 9, at Pleasant Hill, he had mentioned to Franklin a plan for using such methods for getting the gunboats past the rapids at Alexandria. Franklin was favorably impressed with the idea, but there were more pressing events requiring attention just then, and the matter was dropped for the time being. The subject of dams came up again when the army was back at Grand Ecore. Hearing that the *Eastport* had been sunk, Franklin gave Bailey a letter of introduction to Porter, telling the engineer to offer the admiral his help in saving the *Eastport* and to explain his plan for raising the water on the falls. From all indications, Porter paid scant attention to Bailey or his ideas.

[22] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 94; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 316.

When the army and the gunboats were again at Alexandria, Bailey examined the falls and made additional suggestions to Franklin, who was an engineer officer himself. Franklin again sent Bailey to Porter to "urge upon him the necessity of prevailing upon General Banks to order the work to be commenced immediately." Porter was skeptical, remarking that "if damning would get the fleet off, he would have been afloat long before." [23] But the admiral was not now in a position to reject any scheme that had the faintest likelihood of success; he was willing to try it. On April 29, again by Franklin's order, Bailey conferred with Banks and Hunter, explaining what he proposed to do. When he had finished, Hunter commented that he did not think the undertaking would have much chance of success, but that it would be best to make the attempt, especially since Franklin thought it feasible. Banks then issued the necessary orders making available work details, teams, and wagons, and the construction of the dam began the following morning. Unfortunately Franklin was not able to stay and see the results of his and Bailey's efforts. The wound he had received at Sabine Crossroads was still troubling him, and on the same day the dam was started he secured a leave of absence.[24]

Another matter requiring Banks's attention during these trying days was the ever-present problem of the cotton trade. On April 2, it will be recalled,[25] Banks had given the quartermaster department the task of gathering in and shipping cotton to New Orleans, turning over the proceeds of its sale to the Treasury Department for disposition. Naturally the prime

[23] *Com. Con. War,* p. 15; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 402–403; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 358.

[24] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 403; Part iii, 333, 391; surgeon's certificate under date April 30, 1864, Franklin Papers. Emory took command of the 19th Corps, McMillan of Emory's division.

[25] See above, p. 104.

responsibility for this transaction rested with the department's chief quartermaster, Colonel Samuel B. Holabird, who remained in New Orleans during the campaign. Unfortunately, however, it appears that the man holding this key position was one whose standards of personal conduct were something less than puritanical in austerity. For example, there was the remark by a man who hunted high and low for the quartermaster in order to settle a coal bill, and who "finally found him at the residence of Major Houston where 6 or 8 mulatto girls were kept," adding that "Col. Holabird was only partially dressed and was intoxicated." [26] More to the point, much of the cotton sent down to Holabird found its way into the hands of C. A. Weed and Company, ambiguously described by the quartermaster as "commission merchants or treasury agents, . . . acting for several others, who were the owners. . . ." [27] Weed, of course, was formerly Andrew Butler's associate; together they had offered Banks the $100,000 bribe discussed in Chapter II.[28] At the time Banks may not have known the particulars of what was going on in New Orleans, but he had recently received a letter from his wife telling him that Stephen Hoyt, pro-Banks mayor of New Orleans,[29] was of the opinion that Holabird should be removed: "he says they tell fearful stories of him." [30] It is still possible that Holabird was one of the beacons of rectitude in a sea of corruption; certainly his nocturnal activities, interesting though they evidently were, at the most can only be taken as a possible symptom of a general moral debility. The most damning fact, in addition to Mayor Hoyt's suspicions, was what seems to have been a close

[26] Smith-Brady Report, Box 27 (testimony).
[27] *House Exec. Doc.,* 39th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 97, p. 138.
[28] See above, p. 52.
[29] Harrington, *Banks,* p. 167.
[30] Mrs. Banks to Banks, April 15, 1864, Banks Papers. See also her letter to Banks of May 14, 1864, Banks Papers.

connection with Weed and Company. At any rate, Banks probably heard enough upon his return to Alexandria to make him uneasy about Holabird.

Meanwhile in New Orleans anguished howls were being heard in ever greater volume from commercial interests there. The great cotton barbecue they had anticipated had not materialized. Much of the small quantity of cotton that had come into the city had been seized by United States Attorney General Rufus Waples, apparently because it was not brought in in accordance with the January 26 Treasury Department regulations, which Banks had thus far refused to promulgate in his department.[31] The wrathful merchants descended on Flanders. They had his sympathy, he told them, but he was in no position to help them. The final authority rested with the military; there lay the responsibility. One of Banks's supporters wrote that the Treasury Department clique was seeking to cast upon him "the odium of impeded commerce, as well as the destruction of the cotton on Red River." Flanders sent John Hutchins, one of his agents, to see Banks and try to arrange some agreement whereby the flow of cotton might be increased. In a letter carried by Hutchins, Flanders made several suggestions, but told Banks that if none of these suited him he could come to some understanding with Hutchins, who had full authority to act in Flanders' name.[32]

As the leading politician of Louisiana, Banks was naturally reluctant to lose the goodwill of the influential mercantile interests who were currently raising such a clamor. The simplest way out of his predicament seemed to be to promulgate the January 26 regulations. That had been one of the alternatives Flanders had suggested, and some of Banks's friends advised

31 See above, p. 66.

32 B. F. Plumly to Banks, April 7; Cuthbert Bullitt to Banks, April 20; J. P. Sullivan to Banks, April 23; B. F. Flanders to Banks, April 22, 1864, Banks Papers; Flanders to Chase, April 29, 1864, Flanders Letterbook A, Third Special Agency, Treasury Dept. Archives.

him that it would be the wisest thing to do. Moreover, it would have the effect of reducing the part Holabird would play in the cotton trade.[33] Therefore on April 28 he wrote Flanders and Holabird and informed them that as of that date he was promulgating the Treasury Department Additional Regulations of January 26, 1864.[34] In view of the very unsatisfactory military situation then existing, this action probably had little effect. Certainly it did not produce any large quantities of cotton.

It must have been about this same time that J. R. Hamilton of the *New York Times* handed Banks a letter from Benjamin F. Camp in which the latter asked Banks's help in carrying out his grandiose scheme for a cotton speculation.[35] This envisioned revolution of commerce, Camp told the general seductively, originated among Banks's best friends, who believed that its success "would tend to strengthen the position you already justly hold before the country far more than any mere military exploit." [36] There was also a letter from no less a personage than Governor Michael Hahn, who told Banks that "Col. Camp is a man of position and influence and I hope that his plan will receive your favorable consideration." [37] And undoubtedly there were others who were trying to get the general to sponsor this or that project,[38] but they came too late. Much of the Red River Valley was a wasteland; cotton bales had gone up in flames by the tens of thousands. The Federal army, hemmed into a narrow space around Alexandria, was in no position to be of assistance to speculators. The hard hand of war fell even on such privileged individuals as Samuel Casey

[33] These statements are deductions. There is no direct evidence revealing Banks's motives.

[34] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part iii, 317.

[35] See above, pp. 74–76, for a sketch of Camp and his projects.

[36] B. F. Camp to Banks, April —, 1864, Banks Papers.

[37] Hahn to Banks, April 23, 1864, Banks Papers.

[38] Cf. *ibid.* Hahn spoke of other parties who were about to leave New Orleans to present their plans to Banks.

and William Butler [39] when a large quantity of the cotton they had bought was appropriated by the army for use in building the dam. "I wish you would take somebody else's cotton than mine," Lincoln's old friend Butler protested to an officer; "that is very fine cotton!" [40]

Immediately upon their return to Alexandria the Federals began to improve the town's fortifications, and soon it was ringed by two lines of breastworks, redoubts, gun emplacements, and abatis. The 13th Corps held the right of the line, A. J. Smith's command the left, with Emory's division as a general reserve.[41] The army was also strengthened in numbers. As early as April 18 the First Brigade of Grover's division, two regiments present, had arrived at Alexandria from Carrollton, Louisiana. On the 26th McClernand appeared to take command of the 13th Corps detachment, bringing with him Brigadier General Michael Lawler's brigade of the First Division, about 2000 effectives. The First Division of the 16th Corps received substantial reinforcements, and before long Banks had an army of over 31,000 effectives with eighty guns. Save in artillery his losses of the past month were more than made good.[42]

While the Federals were fortifying and damming, Dick Taylor threw his forces around Alexandria and proceeded to beleaguer 30,000 men with 6000. Almost the whole of Louisiana west of the Mississippi was once more in Confederate hands. Taylor's cavalry scouts were at Fort De Russy and

[39] For the Casey-Butler affair, see above, pp. 71–74.

[40] *Com. Con. War,* p. 81.

[41] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 310; Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* pp. 203–204; Beecher, *114th New York,* p. 339.

[42] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 168, 443; Part iii, 294, 296. The April 30 return shows 33,502 present for duty. The only information regarding the reinforcement of the 16th Corps is derived from a comparison of the Mar. 31 and April 30 returns. The date and source of the reinforcement are not known. The increase possibly resulted from the return of men on veteran furlough.

Simmesport; the Bayou Teche country was cleared of enemy troops; Federal garrisons were driven within their lines at Plaquemine; and successful recruiting was being carried on within what was supposed to be Union-held territory.[43] Major was sent with a small cavalry division and J. A. A. West's battery to David's Ferry, thirty miles below Alexandria on the Red, where he captured and burned the transport *Emma* on May 1.[44] On the 4th the *City Belle,* bound for Alexandria with 700 men of the 120th Ohio on board, was captured. Three hundred officers and men of the regiment were taken prisoner and many others were killed or wounded.[45]

On the morning of the same day, May 4, the *John Warner* started down the river from Alexandria with the men of the 56th Ohio on board, going home on veteran furlough. Convoying the *Warner* was the gunboat *Covington.* Not long after getting under way the *Warner* was fired on from the bank by musketry, but bulwarks of cotton bales prevented any casualties. In the afternoon the two boats were joined by the gunboat *Signal,* which carried Lieutenant William Simpson of Banks's staff with dispatches for Grant. After making about twenty miles the boats tied up to the north bank for the night. For a time peace and quiet prevailed, but as the men on the *Warner* were eating their supper a party of Confederates crept silently down to the south shore of the river and fired a volley into the transport. According to one of the soldiers on board, "it was equal to a circus to see those in the cabin at supper rush down the stairs to the stronger protection of the lower deck." [46]

The boats started early the next morning, and at 4:45 A.M. the *Warner,* as it rounded the point opposite Dunn's Bayou,

[43] *Ibid.,* Part i, 585–86.

[44] *Ibid.,* p. 585; *O. R. N.,* xxvi, 102; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 186.

[45] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 475; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 186.

[46] Williams, *56th Ohio,* p. 73.

signaled with its whistle "enemy in sight." She was immediately opened upon by two pieces of artillery and a heavy musketry fire. The *Covington,* next in line, and the *Signal* quickly answered, but the *Warner's* rudders were disabled and she ran into the bank some distance downstream. There, at a range of 100 yards, she came under the fire of another section of artillery and another contingent of dismounted cavalry. The Confederates remorselessly began to cut the transport to splinters, and her decks soon became a slaughter pen for the 56th Ohio. After taking a bloody punishment, the Federals hoisted the white flag. Seeing this, the captain of the *Covington,* Lieutenant George P. Lord, sent a party to burn the surrendered vessel, in violation of accepted military usage. The order could not be carried out, for the colonel of the 56th Ohio protested that they could not burn the boat while 125 of his men lay dead or wounded on her decks.[47]

By this time the Confederates had brought down the section of artillery from Dunn's Bayou, and now the Northern boats were bracketed in a destructive crossfire. Feeling that the tinclads could not survive much more pounding, Lord directed the captain of the *Signal,* Lieutenant Edward Morgan, to accompany the *Covington* upstream out of range. Immediately thereafter the *Signal* was disabled by shots in her port engine and steering gear. The *Covington* took her in tow, Lord himself coming on board the *Signal* with some of his crew. As Morgan was going aft to meet him, a shell cut the *Signal's* port steam pipe, allowing a great deal of steam to escape. This evidently created the impression that the boilers had been exploded, and Lord and his men, followed by a part of the *Signal's* crew, quickly got back on the other boat. The *Covington* then cast off the tow and headed upstream, but her rudder had been damaged and Lord soon found that she was unman-

[47] *Ibid.,* pp. 74–78; *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 113, 117–18.

ageable. To avoid drifting over on the south bank he tied up on the opposite shore and opened on the enemy with his fore, aft, and port broadside guns. Within minutes he found it impossible to continue the action any longer. With his vessel riddled and his ammunition exhausted, he spiked his guns, fired the boat, and led his men up the steep river bank under a hot musketry fusillade. The Confederates now turned their entire attention on the *Signal* and deluged it with such a concentration of fire that Morgan surrendered to save the rest of the crew, especially those who were wounded. During the latter part of the fight an unidentified gunboat tried to come up the river from below the scene of action, but was driven back by Confederate guns.[48]

Thus on May 5 the navy suffered a worse defeat than that of April 26 and 27 above Cane River. Besides the *Warner,* two gunboats mounting a total of seventeen guns had been lost. The crew of the *Covington* lost 42 out of 74 men; 54 of the *Signal's* company were taken prisoner, 12 of them being wounded. Casualties on the *Warner* were never reported, but the 56th Ohio probably lost at least 150 killed, wounded, and missing. As to the Confederate force that achieved these substantial results, Porter wrote Secretary Welles, with his characteristic abandon, that it consisted of 6000 men and twenty-five pieces of artillery. Actually General Baylor, in immediate command, had only two howitzers and two ten-pounder Parrotts and 1000 cavalry. There were no casualties in his command.[49] Including the *Emma* and the *City Belle,* Banks and Porter had lost in the space of five days three transports, two gunboats, and some 600 soldiers and seamen, all at a trifling cost to the Confederates. For the time being, at least, the Red River was closed to Federal shipping.

[48] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 114, 118–19, 134; Williams, *56th Ohio,* pp. 74–78.

[49] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 114, 119, 123, 134; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 442, 475, 621, 623; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 185–86.

Banks was quite conscious of the vulnerability of his communications. On April 28 he had written Admiral Farragut requesting additional gunboats to help keep the river open. Three days later he sent Brigadier General Frank S. Nickerson's brigade by boat to occupy Fort De Russy and drive the Confederates away from the river. Nickerson got as far as Wilson's plantation, reported the enemy in force at Dunn's Bayou, and asked for reinforcements. Instead he was promptly ordered to come back to Alexandria. On May 4 Banks sent a note to Porter concerning the loss of the *City Belle,* with a clear hint that the navy was to blame by not patrolling the river adequately. The admiral replied that he could not be responsible for boats that went off down the river without a convoy, and that the best way to protect the boats would be for the army to send a force down to clean the Confederates out.[50]

Aside from the river fighting there was continual heavy skirmishing on all sides of Alexandria. On the north bank of the Red, Liddell did his best with his small force to keep the enemy confined to Pineville, opposite Alexandria. Confederate scouting parties patrolled the country as far east as the Ouachita (Black) River to prevent the enemy from communicating with Natchez and to pick up survivors from boats sunk on the Red. Taylor ordered that all roads north and east of Pineville be blocked with trees and that all bridges be destroyed, in case Banks should think of retreating toward Arkansas or Vicksburg. South and east of Alexandria the valleys of Bayous Bouef, Robert, and Rapides were scenes of constant fighting, which sometimes attained very substantial proportions. Occasionally the Federals made a sortie in force and pushed Taylor's men back, but in general the Confederates held the offensive, harrying the enemy with sudden attacks and for the most part

[50] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 106, 108–109; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 442–43; Part iii, 316, 412.

keeping them close to Alexandria.[51] "To keep this up with my little force of scarce 6000 men," Taylor reported to department headquarters, "I am compelled to 'eke out the lion's skin with the fox's hide.' On several occasions we have forced the enemy from strong positions by sending drummers to beat calls, lighting camp-fires, blowing bugles, and rolling empty wagons over fence rails." [52] Although as of May 1 Banks had a three-week supply of rations for his men, forage for horses soon began to run very short. Calls for cavalry from commanders at the front could not be adequately met because of the weakened condition of the mounts. Of all this Taylor was well aware, for the animals he captured from the Federals were little more than skeletons. Banks sent out heavy foraging columns only to find that the Confederates had retired before them removing animals and grain from the plantations in the path of the Union advance. "We will play the game the Russians played in the retreat from Moscow," Taylor told Kirby Smith.[53] Since it was impossible to tell how long a time might be required to free Porter's gunboats, Banks was naturally seriously concerned over the shortages of supplies, particularly in view of the enemy's blockade of the river.[54]

That blockade continued to be most effective. Very soon after the fight at Dunn's Bayou, Union reinforcements on their way to Alexandria from Texas could get no farther up the river than Fort De Russy, where they were kept under surveillance by cavalry commanded by Major and Bagby.[55] The newcomers probably wondered what had been happening upstream, for

[51] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 584–91; Scott, *32d Iowa,* pp. 248, 271; Bryner, *47th Illinois,* p. 109; Hanaburgh, *128th New York,* p. 111; Van Alstyne, *Diary,* pp. 314, 318; Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas,* p. 541; Homans, *Mil. Hist. Soc. Mass.,* VIII, 90.

[52] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 590 (May 10, 1864).

[53] *Ibid.,* p. 589 (May 7, 1864).

[54] *Ibid.,* p. 591; Part iii, 359, 390, 412–13, 429, 434, 455, 494–98, 544, 546.

[55] *Ibid.,* Part i, 211, 588; Part iii, 368, 520; Porter to Banks, May 9, 1864, Banks Papers. De Russy was probably occupied on May 6.

the lower Red was then in a foul state. The water was clogged with the bodies of alligators, mules, horses, Negroes, and soldiers, all in varying stages of decomposition.[56] "We see a great many bodies floating down stream," wrote an Iowa infantryman, "and some lodged near the river bank and the buzzards picking at them." [57] It seemed impossible to drink from the polluted river, yet water was scarce and sometimes there was no other place to go.[58]

During these early days in May the center of interest at Alexandria was the dam. On its successful completion depended the safety of the gunboats and the freedom of the army, for the latter could not leave as long as Porter's vessels were stranded above the falls. In the beginning there was a widespread belief that the whole project was a hopeless waste of time, and the dam was the butt of many jokes by both Yankees and Confederates.[59] So general was this skepticism that during the first days of construction Colonel Bailey had difficulty in securing the necessary work details. Such an attitude was understandable when it is considered that for a mile and a quarter parts of the rocky river bottom were laid bare, with the narrow, tortuous channel that wound through it carrying less than four feet of water. At the site of the dam the river was 758 feet in width, the water four to six feet in depth, and the speed of the current fully ten miles an hour. Certainly Bailey had his work cut out for him.[60]

As the work progressed, however, confidence began to increase. Buildings in and around Alexandria, including the one

[56] Scott, *67th Indiana,* p. 74; E. Cort Williams, "Recollections of the Red River Expedition," *Papers Read before the Ohio Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion* (Cincinnati, 1888), II, 112.

[57] S. C. Jones, *Reminiscences of the Twenty-second Iowa Volunteer Infantry* (Iowa City, 1907), pp. 67–68.

[58] Williams, *Ohio Loyal Legion,* p. 112.

[59] Wilson, *New York Loyal Legion,* p. 84.

[60] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 403; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 358.

that had housed the military academy of which Sherman was once superintendent, were demolished to provide material for the dam. Soldiers from Maine were set to work felling trees. Quarries were opened, and wagons and flatboats used to haul brick and stone. From the right bank, where trees were scarce, stone and brick cribs were built out toward the tree dam.[61]

Suspense mounted steadily as the two ends approached each other. Hundreds, even thousands of men lined the river bank watching for some indication that the water in the channel was increasing in depth. One night not long before the gap was closed there was a rumor that a definite rise had been noticed. An officer of a Maine regiment sat on his horse long after dark watching crews of men working on the dam by the light of bonfires. As he sat there a solitary horseman rode up and asked anxiously, "Do you notice the slightest indication of a rise?" The questioner, it turned out, was Banks.[62] Porter had an abiding contempt for Banks, but even he was compelled to admit that the general gave the dam his "whole attention night and day, scarcely sleeping while the work was going on."[63] Work continued around the clock, with many of the men, mostly colored troops, standing neck deep in the water.[64]

Taylor was of course well aware of what the Federals were trying to do and he was anxious to interrupt their labors. Outnumbered as he was, with artillery and musket ammunition running dangerously low, there was little he could do except make demonstrations. On the north bank Liddell was in no position to stop work on the dam. His field battery had been withdrawn late in April by Kirby Smith for service in Arkansas, and he had no artillery until the dam was almost finished, when two ox-drawn twenty-four-pounders were sent

[61] *O. R. N.*, XXVI, 130–31.
[62] Shorey, *15th Maine*, p. 115.
[63] *O. R. N.*, XXVI, 132–33 (Porter to Welles, May 16, 1864).
[64] *Ibid.*, p. 132; *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 405.

to him. With less than 600 men, many of whom were green and unreliable, Liddell was expected by Taylor, quite unreasonably, to harass the dam-builders and at the same time send men downstream to assist in blockading the river.[65] In short, as at Monett's, a vigorous strategy continued to be nullified by overwhelming odds. All the Confederates could do was to hold on grimly and hope that Kirby Smith would send reinforcements from Arkansas before Banks escaped. "Like 'Sister Ann' from her watch tower," said Taylor, "day after day we strained our eyes to see the dust of our approaching comrades arise from the north bank of the Red." [66]

When the tree dam had been built out some 300 feet from the bank, a further extension was formed by four coal barges, which were loaded with stone and placed side by side in the middle of the river. On May 8 the crib dam from the right bank reached the southernmost of these barges, and the only gaps remaining were three twenty-foot openings between the barges. By mid-afternoon the water had risen on the falls sufficiently to allow the *Fort Hindman, Neosho,* and *Osage* to float down into the pool formed by the dam. Why the others did not follow is not known. There was water enough for at least one to do so, and probably several others as well.[67] It seems likely that Porter's men were asleep at the switch. Up to this time the navy had been strangely apathetic.[68] There had been no effort to lighten the gunboats by removing stores, armor, or guns. In fact, an officer of Banks's staff discovered

[65] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 587–89, 633–37; Capt. Daniel Scully to Maj. E. Surget, May 9, 1864, George W. Logan Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.

[66] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* p. 190.

[67] *O. R.,* xxxiv, Part i, 209, 254; *O. R. N.,* xxvi, 131. When launched, the *Osage* and *Neosho* drew four feet, the *Pittsburg, Carondelet, Louisville,* and *Mound City* six feet. (Charles B. Boynton, *The History of the Navy during the Rebellion* [New York, 1867], pp. 501–503, 506.)

[68] D. D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York and San Francisco, 1887), p. 526 to the contrary notwithstanding.

"that every one of the gunboats had cotton in their holds. I went to the general [Banks] and said that I did not think we should be working there like beavers, night and day, to construct a dam to float these vessels when they were loaded down with cotton; and as a result of his expostulations with the admiral they were compelled to disgorge."[69] If the boats had been lightened, all of them could have passed over the upper falls on the 8th.

As the remaining apertures in the dam were closed, the water began to rise more rapidly, exerting a tremendous pressure. Shortly before midnight Banks personally inspected the dam and became convinced that it was dangerously close to giving way under the strain. He immediately rode up the river to where the gunboats lay to see if they were ready to pass the rapids. Seeing no signs of activity on the vessels, he sent a note to Porter telling him of his observations and urging him to see that his boats were ready to move as soon as possible in the morning. But before anything could be done, at 5 A.M. the river pushed aside two of the barges in the center of the dam and began to pour through the opening.[70] As soon as he heard of what had happened, Porter jumped on a horse, hurried up to the trapped boats, and ordered the *Lexington* to attempt to pass the falls and then go straight through the gap in the dam. She managed to get over the falls in the nick of time, for the water level was dropping rapidly. A deep silence fell upon the thousands of spectators lining the banks as the veteran gunboat headed for the dam. "She entered the gap with a full head of steam on, pitched down the roaring current, made two or three spasmodic rolls, hung for a moment on the rocks below, and then was swept into deep water by the current and

[69] *Com. Con. War,* p. 82. Also Porter, *Naval History,* pp. 525–26; *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 140, 146; Shorey, *15th Maine,* pp. 116–17. Porter was in poor health at this time and his illness may well have been a factor contributing to the navy's lassitude.

[70] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 209; *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 136; *Com. Con. War,* p. 16.

rounded to, safely into the bank." Thus Porter described the scene.[71] A tremendous roar of applause burst from the crowd as the *Lexington* emerged intact from a welter of foam. The *Neosho, Fort Hindman,* and *Osage* then followed her through the dam, with only the first suffering minor damage to her hull.[72]

After an initial attempt to repair the breach in the dam, Bailey decided that the surest way to get the rest of the vessels through the rapids was to build wing dams at the head of the falls, and he and his men set to work again. The unexpected delay that this involved was a blow to Banks's plans. He had expected to be able to begin the retreat from Alexandria on the 9th. The day before the dam broke he had told McClernand, Smith, Emory, and Arnold to hold their commands in readiness to march on two hours' notice, and on the 8th the order of march was drawn up. Now it appeared that there would be a delay of unknown duration at a time when Banks was becoming exceedingly uneasy about staying longer at Alexandria. Any day now the troops that had been taken from Taylor might return from Arkansas. There was little forage left for the animals upon which the train and artillery depended.[73] "We have exhausted the country," he told Porter on the 9th, "and with the march that is before us it will be perilous to remain more than another day." [74] On May 11 he sent a staff officer to Porter to impress upon him the need for the utmost haste in freeing the rest of the navy's boats. From other sources the admiral learned of Banks's uneasiness, and rumors came to him to the effect that the navy might be abandoned, although A. J. Smith assured him he would stand by him what-

[71] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 131 (Porter to Welles, May 16, 1864).

[72] *Ibid.;* Flinn, *Campaigning with Banks,* p. 140; Tiemann, *159th New York,* pp. 72–73.

[73] Banks to Grant, May 4, 1864, Banks Papers; cf. *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 147.

[74] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 136.

ever the rest of the army did.[75] Porter was not surprised at these ominous reports. Ever since the return to Grand Ecore he had been apprehensive that he would wake up one morning and find that the army had deserted him. To prevent such a disaster he tried to reassure Banks. Another foot of water was all he needed, he wrote the general, and surely Colonel Bailey would quickly supply that. He pointed out that the Northern press had been very critical of the campaign up to now, thus appealing to Banks's political sensibilities, but if the fleet was saved, the newspapers would be forced to admit that it was a splendid achievement. "Now, general," Porter went on, in the manner of someone trying to reassure a frightened child, "I really see nothing that should make us despond. You have a fine army, and I shall have a strong fleet of gunboats to drive away an inferior force in our front. . . . I hope, sir, you will not let anything divert you from the attempt to get these vessels all through safely, even if we have to stay here and eat mule meat." [76] Immediately Banks replied that he had never had the slightest intention of leaving Alexandria until all the gunboats were rescued. All he was trying to convey to the admiral was the vital necessity of finishing the task as rapidly as humanly possible. His men had been working night and day for almost two weeks, and "they complained bitterly when the navy appeared to be doing nothing to effect the release of their own ships." It was because of these complaints that he had sent Colonel Wilson of his staff to speak with Porter.[77]

The navy was working now. Guns, ammunition, and supplies were taken off the boats and carried down below the falls by wagon and caisson; eleven obsolete thirty-two-pounders were destroyed. The armor was taken from the ironclads and

[75] *Ibid.*, p. 140; Scott, *32d Iowa,* pp. 250–51.
[76] *O. R. N.*, xxvi, 140–41 (May 11, 1864).
[77] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

thrown into the river, and the exposed sides of the boats smeared with tar to conceal the bare timbers from the enemy. While the wing dams were being built the boats were painfully winched and sparred through the shallows a foot at a time.[78]

By the afternoon of the 10th it appeared that the wing dams would not be able to supply enough water, but at this juncture Lieutenant Colonel U. B. Pearsall asked and received permission to construct a so-called bracket dam according to his own ideas. This was completed with great speed and produced the promised depth of water, probably with the help of a slight natural rise in the river. By May 13 all the vessels were safely over the falls. Backwater from the Mississippi made easy sailing the rest of the way, and by the 15th Porter, sick but rejoicing, was out of the Red River.[79] "I am clear of my troubles," he wrote his mother, "and my fleet is safe out in the broad Mississippi. I have had a hard and anxious time of it." [80]

[78] *Ibid.,* pp. 132, 137–39, 142–45; Williams, *Ohio Loyal Legion,* p. 115; *Com. Con. War,* p. 84.

[79] *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 132, 149; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 255; Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 373.

[80] Porter to Mrs. Porter, May 18, 1864, David D. Porter Papers, Division of Manuscripts, Library of Congress. See also Porter to Welles, May 16, 1864, *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 130–35.

CHAPTER IX

*

The End of the Campaign

*

ALTHOUGH BANKS WAS ALARMED at the delay caused by the breaking of the dam on May 9, the additional time spent at Alexandria gave the army an opportunity to save more of its property than would otherwise have been possible. Much of this was loaded on transports and sent down the river when the army retreated. General McMillan, who had for some time been thoroughly disgusted with Banks and the whole expedition,[1] was given the congenial task of throwing speculators' cotton off private riverboats to make room for government property. This suited him perfectly. "Fling overboard every damned pound of cotton," said McMillan, ignoring all protests, "and fling the damned proprietors over after it." [2]

Banks's interest in cotton, and the fact that everyone knew that army wagons had been used to haul it into Alexandria, had given wide currency to the idea that the general was personally aiding and abetting private speculators. Those who disliked Banks, and their name was legion now, naturally did nothing to correct this impression. In an official communication to Banks, A. J. Smith went so far as to accuse him of bartering army transports to speculators for "private pur-

[1] McMillan to Secretary of the Interior J. P. Usher, April 30, 1864, Lincoln Papers. Sugar and cotton were accommodated only after all other government stores had been loaded.

[2] Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* pp. 206–207; also *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 532, 534; *Com. Con. War.* p. 45.

poses." [3] Instead of being put under arrest for this flagrant insubordination, Smith was only mildly rebuked and assured that government property alone was being loaded on the boats. Only the day before Banks had instructed his quartermaster that all transportation, whether wagons or boats, would be required to carry public property; the freight of private persons not connected with the army could not be taken "under any circumstances whatever." The practice of using army wagons to haul private cotton into town [4] was terminated forthwith on pain of confiscation of the produce so hauled.[5] Apparently Banks had at last come to the conclusion that war and commerce could not be carried on in the same place at the same time.

The townspeople of Alexandria awaited the impending departure of the Northerners with mixed emotions. The great majority were undoubtedly anxious to see the Yankees go, but they were apprehensive because of widespread rumors and threats that the town would be burnt when the Union army left. Persons connected with the army insisted that such orders had been given. "Officers and men," said a resident of Rapides Parish, "were overheard discussing the subject and insisting that it should be carried into execution. . . . I overheard three officers conversing on the sidewalk where they had just halted in their promenade. One of them remarked with great emphasis, 'The only way is to drive out the women and children, and burn their dwellings.' Similar remarks could be indefinitely multiplied." [6] Business took another local man to A. J. Smith's headquarters boat, and there, in Smith's presence, he heard several regimental officers state their intention to burn the town.[7]

[3] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part iii, 534–35.
[4] See above, pp. 103–104.
[5] *O. R.*, xxxiv, Part iii, 515.
[6] Whittington, "Rapides Parish," *La. Hist. Qrly.*, pp. 35–36.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

On May 9 Banks ordered General Arnold to keep a detachment of 500 cavalry under reliable officers in the town when the evacuation took place to prevent any "conflagration or other act which would give notice to the enemy of the movements of the army." [8] On May 13, the day the retreat began, some citizens sent Dr. G. W. Southwick to tell Banks of their fears for the town and of the threats of the soldiers. In reply Southwick received the following note:

> Headquarters Department of the Gulf
> *Alexandria, May 13, 1864*
>
> Dr. G. W. Southwick:
>
> Sir: The General wishes me to inform you that Col. Gooding will with 500 men, guard the town, and his force will be strengthened, if possible, in order to provide against the emergency you fear.
>
> I am, sir, yours truly,
> Geo. B. Drake, A. A. G.[9]

This assurance was thankfully received. But as time passed the promised guard did not appear. Becoming alarmed, some of the people tried to locate Banks to tell him that Gooding had not arrived. The general was nowhere to be found. They did, however, encounter Lieutenant William S. Beebe, Banks's ordnance officer, who at once volunteered to go with them to see Gooding. They found the trooper at his camp near Bayou Rapides. When they showed him the note quoted above, he seemed to be genuinely surprised, adding with an oath, "this is just like old Banks." [10] The meaning of this remark is not clear, but it is not flattering to Banks in any of its implications.

Union troops in and around Alexandria began to withdraw from the town at 7 A.M. on the 13th.[11] Between 8 and 9 A.M.

[8] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part iii, 521.

[9] *Official Report Relative to the Conduct of Federal Troops in Western Louisiana, during the Invasions of 1863 and 1864, Compiled from Sworn Testimony, under Direction of Governor Henry W. Allen* (Shreveport, 1865), pp. 72–73.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 428. Possibly earlier.

Federal soldiers, and possibly other persons, began setting fire to the town. Some had buckets of a mixture of turpentine and camphene which they smeared on buildings with mops, remarking that they were "preparing the place for Hell!" Apparently scores of fires were set almost simultaneously, and the wind scattered sparks and burning debris everywhere. One man who tried to keep his home from catching fire by using water and wet blankets was peremptorily ordered from the house by men he identified as cavalry officers; enlisted men then went upstairs and started a fire. The property of prominent Unionists, unmolested by the Confederates for the past three years, was put to the torch. Looting was widespread.[12] A Northern soldier left a vivid account of the scenes he witnessed. "Cows went bellowing through the street," he wrote.

> Chickens flew out from yards and fell in the streets with their feathers scorching on them. A dog with his bushy tail on fire ran howling through, turning to snap at the fire as he ran. There is no use trying to tell about the sights I saw and the sounds of distress I heard. It cannot be told and could hardly be believed if it were told. Crowds of people, men, women, children and soldiers, were running with all they could carry, when the heat would become unbearable, and dropping all, they would flee for their lives, leaving everything but their bodies to burn. Over the levee the sights and sounds were harrowing. Thousands of people, mostly women, children and old men, were wringing their hands as they stood by the little piles of what was left of all their worldly possessions. Thieves were everywhere, and some of them were soldiers.[13]

A Southern witness stated that A. J. Smith rode through the streets exclaiming "Hurrah, boys, this looks like war!" [14] According to a Northern newspaperman, there was a general stampede to the river bank to escape the suffocating heat.

[12] Whittington, "Rapides Parish," *La. Hist. Qrly.,* pp. 26–28, 30–32; Van Alstyne, *Diary,* p. 320; Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* p. 207; Pellet, *114th New York,* p. 233.
[13] Van Alstyne, *Diary,* pp. 320–21.
[14] Whittington, "Rapides Parish," *La. Hist. Qrly.,* p. 37.

Among the fugitives were the families of those local men who had enlisted in the Union army, and they now, having been left destitute by the fire, asked to go on board the army transports and follow their husbands. "They were refused. They became frantic with excitement and rage.... With tears streaming down their cheeks, women and children begged and implored the boats to take them on board." Several more-or-less prominent citizens who had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States were also refused passage to New Orleans.[15]

Some Federals, especially Emory, Grover's provost guard, and officers of Banks's staff and headquarters guard, did what they could to help the people in fighting the fire. Attempts were made to check the flames by using explosives, but the fires had been set in so many places and the wind spread them so quickly that nothing could be done. By noon most of the town had been leveled.[16] It is difficult to determine just who all the incendiaries were. Lieutenant Beebe and Captain Richard W. Francis, the latter an officer of Banks's headquarters guard, told the people that Banks was not responsible for burning the town, but that A. J. Smith had given verbal orders to do so.[17] In view of this statement and of the previous conduct of Smith's men, it seems reasonable to suppose that they were involved. Cavalry and mounted infantry were specifically mentioned by witnesses as spreading the fire, although the latter may well have been mistaken for the former.[18] Negro troops and jayhawkers were also blamed.[19] As for Banks himself, it seems clear that he did not order the place burned. He was,

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 28–30.

[16] *Ibid.*, pp. 26–28, 31–32, 37; *Com. Con. War,* p. 335; *Official Report Relative to the Conduct of Federal Troops,* p. 85.

[17] *Official Report Relative to the Conduct of Federal Troops,* p. 79.

[18] 87th Illinois, 16th Indiana, 2d Louisiana, and 31st Massachusetts were the regiments of mounted infantry then with the army.

[19] Whittington, "Rapides Parish," *La. Hist. Qrly.,* pp. 27, 36; Van Alstyne, *Diary,* p. 320; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 591.

however, well aware of the threats that had been made,[20] and a better protection could have been provided for the town.

Leaving the smoking ruins behind them, the Federals marched down the river road toward Fort De Russy and Marksville. In advance was the 19th Corps, screened by cavalry, followed by the trains, and then the 13th Corps. Smith's command fell in at the rear of the column. As usual the route of the army was marked by the burning buildings it left in its wake. Thirteen miles south of Alexandria the roads were found to be obstructed, and reports came in that the main body of Confederate troops was only seven miles away.[21] All the while Southern cavalry was skirmishing with the column front and rear.

On the next day, May 14, the road to Bayou Choctaw was repaired and the stream spanned by a pontoon bridge. That evening some of the troops camped near the wrecks of the *John Warner, Signal,* and *Covington,* and they were greatly outraged when they found, scattered over the ground, the letters to parents and lady friends which they had sent off almost two weeks before. All of them of course had been rifled by the Confederates, and the sweet nothings which many of them contained probably provided considerable entertainment for Major's roughhewn plainsmen.[22] On the 15th the van of the column descended into the Choctaw swamp, crossed the bayou, and began a cautious advance out on the Avoyelles Prairie. Here attacks by Major and Bagby turned back the leading troops several times, but by that evening sufficient troops were brought up to flank the Confederates out of their position. The Federals moved forward again and occupied Marksville that night.[23]

[20] *Com. Con. War,* p. 335.

[21] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 517, 558–59, 568; Bringhurst and Swigart, *46th Indiana,* p. 93.

[22] Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* p. 207; Beecher, *114th New York,* pp. 347–48.

[23] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 277, 592–93, 623; Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* pp. 209–10.

When the march was resumed on the 16th, Banks found that Taylor had drawn up his small force on the prairie at Mansura, with the town at the center of the Confederate position. On the right were the horsemen of Bagby and Major, strengthened by nineteen guns. The left was held by Polignac's infantry and two regiments of Debray's troopers, with thirteen guns. About half of this fine collection of artillery had been captured from Banks at Sabine Crossroads.[24] Early in the morning the Union line of battle advanced into range and a heavy artillery duel commenced. The scene of the engagement was strikingly beautiful. The lines were drawn up on a long stretch of prairie some three miles in breadth, "smooth as a billiard table," according to Dick Taylor, and surrounded with dense woods. Here every movement and maneuver of the various commands could be clearly seen.[25] Extended across the plain were regiment after regiment, brigade after brigade. Almost the entire Northern army was visible, wrote a Connecticut soldier, "resplendent in steel and brass; miles of lines and columns; the cavalry gliding over the ground in the distance with a delicate, nimble lightness of innumerable twinkling feet; a few batteries enveloped in smoke and incessantly thundering, others dashing swiftly to salient positions; division and corps commanders with their staff officers clustering about them, watching through their glasses the hostile army; couriers riding swiftly from wing to wing; everywhere the beautiful silken flags; and the scene ever changing with the involutions and evolutions of the vast host." [26] Seldom were the pomp and panoply of war so romantically displayed, and the rank and file were charmed by the spectacle.[27]

[24] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 593.

[25] *Ibid.*, pp. 325, 593.

[26] Sprague, *13th Connecticut*, p. 212.

[27] Ewer, *3d Massachusetts Cavalry*, p. 181; Pellet, *114th New York*, p. 234; Bryner, *47th Illinois*, pp. 114–15; Hanaburgh, *128th New York*, p. 114; Lufkin, *13th Maine*, p. 92; Clark, *116th New York*, pp. 179–80; Smith, *Soldier's Diary*, pp.

The action was confined almost entirely to artillery fire, and for four hours Taylor held the 19th Corps in check. Then at 10 A.M. A. J. Smith's command, which had been brought up from the rear to attack the Southern left, began to move forward, accompanied by the 19th Corps. With perhaps 18,000 men now bearing down upon him, Taylor did not try to make a stand but withdrew in the direction of Evergreen, where his wagons were.[28] Neither side suffered many casualties,[29] a fact that added greatly to the attractiveness of the engagement.[30]

After Taylor had retreated, Banks marched through Mansura to Bayou de Glaise. From there the route of the army lay through Moreauville, across Yellow Bayou, and then to Simmesport on the Atchafalaya. There was warm skirmishing on the 17th. Cavalry led by Debray and Wharton ambushed and roughly handled the Union rear guard. Near Moreauville Colonel W. O. Yager led two regiments of horse in an attack on the wagon train, but without marked success. While the rear of the column was being harassed in this manner the van was arriving at Simmesport, by now only a name without a place.[31]

By the 18th the whole army was in the vicinity of where

113–16; Shorey, *15th Maine,* p. 119; Powers, *38th Massachusetts,* pp. 147–48; Tiemann, *159th New York,* p. 76; Beecher, *114th New York,* pp. 349–51; Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 275; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 425. This striking display evoked almost unanimous enthusiasm among eyewitnesses. Scarcely any account of the engagement failed to comment on the almost unreal beauty of the scene.

[28] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 325, 593; Part iii, 616; Sprague, *13th Connecticut,* pp. 212–13; Tiemann, *159th New York,* pp. 75–76; Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas,* pp. 542–43.

[29] This is the concensus of the reports of the action; there were no returns of casualties. On the other hand, J. M. Williams, *"The Eagle Regiment," 8th Wisc. Inf'ty Vols.* (Belleville, Wisconsin, 1890), pp. 25–26, stated that the 8th Wisconsin sustained thirty-four casualties and fired fifty rounds of ammunition per man.

[30] Scott, *32d Iowa,* p. 275.

[31] *Ibid.,* p. 276; Beecher, *114th New York,* pp. 353–54; Stanyan, *8th New Hampshire,* pp. 470–71; *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 443–44, 593–94.

Simmesport used to be. Late in the morning word came in that the Confederates were still pressing the pursuit. In obedience to orders from A. J. Smith, Mower took three brigades, recrossed Yellow Bayou, and began to push back the Southern skirmishers he found there. After advancing two miles Mower came upon the main Confederate line, consisting of Wharton's cavalry and Polignac's small division of infantry. A hot artillery and musketry fight began. The Southern line advanced but was driven back by Mower, who then fell back himself. Again the Confederates returned to the attack with a stubbornness and impetuosity that reminded one Federal soldier, after the war, of the sort of assault Nathan Bedford Forrest was accustomed to make—high praise indeed. Much of the fighting took place in a thicket of undergrowth and dead trees, which eventually caught fire and sent up sheets of flame and clouds of smoke, adding to the already scorching heat of the sun. Once more Taylor's men were driven back, but the strong Southern artillery prevented any pursuit. When the action closed, both lines were back in their original positions. The Federals believed they had fought against heavy odds. Actually there could not have been more than 5000 Confederates engaged, as compared to about 4500 Northern soldiers. As usual the offensive proved costly, and Taylor lost a total of 608 men to the Federals' estimated 350.[32] Among the Northern dead was Colonel S. G. Hill's young son. "I had often seen the boy at Alexandria," said an enlisted man, "and wondered why such a child should be in such a place. He rode a handsome pony and wore the infantry uniform, even to a little sword." [33] He entered the fight at his father's side and was shot through the head.[34]

[32] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 304, 320, 329, 337, 347–48, 357, 364, 367, 370, 467, 594, 624, 631; Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction*, p. 191; Scott, *32d Iowa*, pp. 259, 277; Lubbock, *Six Decades in Texas*, p. 543; Bryner, *47th Illinois*, pp. 114–15.

[33] Van Alstyne, *Diary*, p. 328.

[34] *O. R.*, XXXIV, Part i, 330.

While the fight at Yellow Bayou was in progress, the rest of Banks's army was in the process of crossing the Atchafalaya. The resourceful Colonel Bailey had anchored transports and riverboats in a line abreast across the bayou, and on these he had laid a bridge on which the artillery and trains were able to cross. The infantry was ferried over in the meantime.[35] By May 20 all of Banks's men, tired, worn, and ragged, had completed the crossing.[36] Any possible pursuit was now cut off by Atchafalaya Bayou; the campaign was over.

[35] Johnson and Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders,* IV, 360.

[36] Jones, *22d Iowa,* p. 69. Canby, however, who had arrived at Simmesport on May 18, was agreeably surprised at the condition of the army. See *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part iii, 644.

CHAPTER X

*

Aftermath

*

STATISTICS MAY MEAN MUCH or little in assessing the results of a campaign. In this instance they are valuable chiefly as an illustration of the imagination and aggressiveness displayed by Richard Taylor in contending against the Federals' overwhelming numerical and material superiority.

Largely as a result of the rout at Sabine Crossroads, Banks's army lost a total of 187 wagons and ambulances loaded with supplies, 1007 draft animals, and an undetermined number of cavalry mounts and privately owned vehicles. At Fort De Russy, Alexandria, Henderson's Hill, and Pleasant Hill, the Federals captured twenty guns, which in point of numbers exactly balanced their loss on April 8.[1] As far as quality was concerned, however, the Confederates had much the better of the exchange. In killed, wounded, and missing, the Union loss approximated 5000; complete returns for all minor actions and skirmishes would probably bring the total to 5200.[2] On the river the army lost the expensive hospital boat *Woodford* and the transports *Emma, City Belle,* and *John Warner*. The navy lost two transports (*Champion No. 3* and *Champion No. 5*), an ironclad (*Eastport*), and two tinclads (*Signal* and *Covington*), and suffered at least 200 casualties. A minimum of twenty-eight naval guns were lost or destroyed.

[1] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 241, 312, 314.

[2] *Ibid.,* pp. 383, 425, 444, 450, 464, 468; see also casualty figures in the text for each engagement. An estimated 250 casualties were added for skirmishes.

Taylor's casualties could not have fallen short of 4100, and almost certainly reached 4300.[3] Two river steamers were lost, including the *New Falls City,* but aside from artillery there is no record of any other loss of matériel. In all likelihood it was negligible; the Confederates had comparatively little to lose.

When the losses of the forces in Arkansas are included, together with naval losses, the final totals for the entire campaign are as follows:

	Confederate	*Union*
Men:		
Louisiana	4275	5412 [a]
Arkansas	2300	2750
total	6575	8162
Guns:		
net loss	—	57 (including naval guns)
net gain	17–26 [b]	—
Wagons:		
gross loss	50 (est.)	822 (govt. owned only)
net gain	600 (est.)	—
Cavalry mounts and draft animals (gross loss):	700 (est.) [c]	3700 (3507 known)
Vessels	3 (river steamers) [d]	9 (including 3 gunboats)

[a] Including 200 estimated naval casualties.

[b] At least 8 of the 17 guns aboard the *Signal* and the *Covington* were salvaged by the Confederates. If all were finally salvaged, the larger figure is correct. Cf. *O. R. N.,* XXVI, 172.

[c] A very rough estimate.

[d] Including the *New Falls City,* sunk by the Confederates above Loggy Bayou to block the Red River; previous condition of the boat is not known.

Except in matériel, these losses were insignificant when compared with those of the major campaigns of the war. The real cost of the Red River expedition lay in the prolongation of the conflict that it undoubtedly caused. Sherman was deprived of

[3] See casualty figures in the text for each engagement. An estimated 200 casualties were added for skirmishes.

the services of A. J. Smith's hardened veterans, 10,000 of them, whom he had intended to have with him when he marched against Johnston in Georgia.[4] The campaign also caused a ten-month postponement of the attempt to capture Mobile.[5] This allowed Polk to reinforce Johnston with 15,000 men, the large majority of whom would have otherwise been required to defend Mobile. This fact, together with the absence of Smith's troops, meant that when May came Sherman confronted Johnston with 108,000 men instead of 118,000, and was opposed by 65,000 instead of 50,000.[6] These sharply reduced odds certainly had the effect of delaying Sherman in North Georgia and, therefore, in his march to the sea and through the Carolinas.[7] How much the war was lengthened by this, of course, can only be surmised. Two months may be a reasonable estimate, perhaps even longer.

Every campaign of the war had its might-have-beens, and the present one was no exception. The might-have-been in this case was related to the critically important strategic decision that Kirby Smith was called upon to make when Banks retreated to Grand Ecore after the battle at Pleasant Hill. The Confederate commander had concentrated most of his troops against Banks. The question was whether to maintain this concentration and continue to press offensive operations on the Red

[4] However, on April 27, 1864, Sherman wrote his wife that he would have "20,000 less men than I calculated from the Red River disaster. . . ." Howe, ed., *Sherman's Home Letters,* pp. 288–89.

[5] Farragut's invasion of Mobile Bay in August was assisted by only a relatively small number of troops, which captured Forts Morgan and Gaines. See Henry, *Story of the Confederacy,* pp. 405–406.

[6] For the derivation of these figures, see *O. R.,* XXXVIII, Part iii, 676–77, 869, and Sherman, *Memoirs,* II, 23–24, 48. Sherman's effective force was increased early in the campaign by about 10,000 cavalry; these troops are included in the figures for Sherman's army.

[7] Sherman had also hoped to open a supply route from Mobile via the Alabama River, but he evidently did not make such a route a factor in his plans when he started toward Atlanta. See Sherman, *Memoirs,* II, 28, and Badeau, *Grant,* III, 40–44.

River, or to take the bulk of Taylor's force and march against Steele in Arkansas. Kirby Smith chose the latter course. To Taylor this decision seemed little better than sheer idiocy. The Union army under Banks was retreating and, he believed, badly demoralized, with Porter's fleet in a fair way to be trapped by a falling river. The capture or destruction of one or both he considered not only possible but highly probable, if only they were vigorously pursued.

> In vain had all this been pointed out to General Kirby Smith [wrote Taylor after the war] when he came to me at Pleasant Hill in the night after the battle. Granted that he was alarmed for Shreveport, sacred to him and his huge staff as Benares, dwelling-place of many gods, to the Hindoo; yet, when he marched from that place on the 16th of April against Steele, the latter, already discomfited by Price's horse, was retreating, and, with less than a third of Banks' force at Grand Ecore, was then further from Shreveport than was Banks. To pursue a retreating foe numbering six thousand men, he took over seven thousand infantry, and left me twelve hundred to operate against twenty odd thousand and a powerful fleet.[8]

Taylor insisted that if Kirby Smith had concentrated against Banks, the Union army and fleet would have been bagged, the Mississippi opened by the captured vessels, and the outnumbered Confederates facing Sherman in Georgia reinforced with troops from the Trans-Mississippi Department. "The Southern people might have been spared the humiliation of defeat, and the countless woes and wrongs inflicted on them by their conquerors." [9]

Obviously this was an extreme statement. Porter would almost certainly have been able to destroy his gunboats before allowing them to be captured. Without these boats the Confederates could never have crossed the Mississippi with large

[8] Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* pp. 188–89. Taylor refers to infantry. Actually Steele had at least 7300. Taylor was left with Polignac's division, probably 1500–2000 rather than 1200. This is not certain, however.

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 189.

bodies of troops, even if those troops were willing to go, which was by no means certain.[10] Isolated as the Trans-Mississippi Department was, even the capture of Banks's entire army could only have had the effect of lengthening the war, not of reversing the outcome. Before the fall of Vicksburg such a victory might have exerted a powerful influence on the course of events; now it was too late.

But although the most complete victory over Banks and Porter would not have produced the golden fruits envisioned by Taylor in his memoirs, the indictment of Kirby Smith's strategy must be accounted a true bill. The only substantial reason that Smith ever gave for not allowing Taylor to keep Churchill's and Walker's infantry was the alleged impossibility of supplying such a large force on the lower Red River. Yet he did not hesitate to carry these same troops deep into central Arkansas, where problems of supply were if anything more difficult than in Louisiana. Once in Arkansas, moreover, this infantry played no part whatever in precipitating Steele's retreat to Little Rock; that was due entirely to the capture of the Federal trains by Price's cavalry. On the other hand, if Taylor had had these troops with him at Monett's Ferry, he might well have captured or dispersed Banks's army and forced Porter to destroy his fleet. At the very least, even if the Federals had succeeded in reaching the Mississippi, it could have been done only by running a fearful gauntlet. However, Kirby Smith regarded Steele's capture as a certainty and Banks's as a gamble, and so he decided to play for the smaller stakes. Apparently he did not realize that while the Union could play that way and win, the Confederacy could not.

Taylor did not—in fact could not—remain much longer under Kirby Smith's command. Plagued by more-or-less chronic ill health, bitterly disappointed by lost opportunities, and thoroughly disgusted with his commander's generalship,

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Taylor found himself unable to restrain his anger. On June 5, climaxing an unpleasant correspondence that had begun some time ago, he wrote Smith a letter the equal of which few high-ranking officers have ever received from a subordinate. Scathingly he denounced Smith's strategy and his conduct of the Arkansas campaign. "The roads to Saint Louis and New Orleans should now be open to us," he wrote.

> Your strategy has riveted the fetters on both. At Jenkins' Ferry the tactical skill which carried Churchill's, Parsons' and Walker's divisions successively into the fight after its predecessor had been driven back, and which failed to use at all, either in the fight or in a pursuit, a force of over 7,000 cavalry, succeeded the strategy which declined the capture of Banks' army and Porter's fleet to march after the comparatively insignificant force of Steele. The same regard for duty which led me to throw myself between you and popular indignation and quietly take the blame of your errors compels me to tell you the truth, however objectionable to you. The grave errors you have committed in the recent campaign may be repeated if the unhappy consequences are not kept before you. After the desire to serve my country, I have none more ardent than to be relieved from longer serving under your command.[11]

This insubordination could scarcely be ignored. Kirby Smith put Taylor under arrest on June 10 and sent the relevant correspondence to President Davis with an explanatory letter.[12] On that same day in Richmond Congress passed a joint resolution tendering its thanks to Taylor and his men for their "brilliant successes" at Mansfield and Pleasant Hill.[13] Later that summer Taylor was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general and ordered east of the Mississippi to take command of the Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana, a position he held until the final surrender. In the Trans-Mis-

[11] *O. R.,* XXXIV, Part i, 546–48.

[12] *Ibid.,* pp. 540–48 (Smith to Davis, June 11, Taylor to Smith, April 28, May 24, June 5, 1864, the last three sent as inclosures. See also Smith to Taylor, June 5, *ibid.,* pp. 538–40).

[13] *Ibid.,* p. 597.

sissippi Department there were no further military operations of importance, save perhaps Price's dramatic but barren raid through Arkansas and Missouri. Kirby Smith retained command until the end, seeking refuge south of the Rio Grande when the department capitulated in May, 1865.

The estrangement between Smith and Taylor was unfortunate from every point of view, the more so because both men were fundamentally sincere and upright individuals. But the break was inevitable. Taylor could not find it in his nature to be the subordinate of a man he believed to be his inferior in ability and intellect.

"General Banks looks dejected and worn, and is hooted at by his men," remarked a soldier who saw him when the campaign ended.[14] The march up the Red had been begun with such great expectations. The Confederates could not stand before the splendid Federal army; Shreveport would be quickly taken and the enemy pursued into Texas. Instead there came the rout at Sabine Crossroads, the shattering engagement at Pleasant Hill, the harried army's 200-mile retreat to the Mississippi. Even Banks's friends could only regard his campaign as a sad failure; his enemies would call it a disaster. To the men in the ranks it had been a useless waste of their blood and labor brought about by his bungling, and Banks experienced the ultimate humiliation of a commander when he was hissed by his troops. Even the scheme for securing vast quantities of cotton had turned out to be a miserable fiasco; only a paltry number of bales ever reached New Orleans.[15] To complete this disheartening picture, Banks found his new superior officer, Canby, waiting for him at Simmesport. From

[14] Jones, *22d Iowa,* p. 69.

[15] Less than 4000 bales were sent to New Orleans. Of this number 2458 went to C. A. Weed and Company (including Wells' 1000 bales). See *House Exec. Doc.,* 39th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 97, pp. 29, 32–35; *Sen. Exec. Doc.,* 40th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 56, p. 11.

then on he was never to be allowed to command troops in the field. He was now, in short, little more than a head clerk in Canby's Military Division of West Mississippi.[16] These blows to his prestige dissipated all those grand dreams of the presidency. Banks could not have known it at the time, but his political sun began to set on the afternoon of April 8 when Taylor's men started their charge across the fields at Sabine Crossroads.

Upon his return to New Orleans the general assumed the remnants of what had once been an almost absolute authority in the Department of the Gulf. His duties were now appropriately confined to the political sphere, and even there Canby did not hesitate to overrule him. In the fall a leave of absence afforded a respite from this humiliating situation, and he traveled to Washington with hopes of having his powers restored. But the President flatly refused to give him Canby's command or to assign him to field duty.[17] Events on the Red River had largely eliminated Banks as an important figure on the national political scene, and by now the crucial elections of November, 1864, were over. Lincoln could afford to be firm.

With the President's approval Banks postponed his return to New Orleans in order to use such influence as he still possessed to win congressional recognition for the reconstructed government of Louisiana.[18] This unavoidably earned him the ill will of the Radicals, who were remorseless foes of Lincolnian reconstruction. The Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War was called upon to investigate the "disastrous" Red River expedition, and so Banks joined that unhappy company of men who were subjected to the scrutiny of Ben Wade and his colleagues.[19]

16 For Canby's assignment see above, pp. 247–48.
17 Harrington, *Banks,* pp. 163–64.
18 *Ibid.,* p. 164; Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* VIII, 121 n.
19 *Com. Con. War,* p. iii.

The hearings began on December 14, 1864, with Banks as the first witness, and continued intermittently until April 21. Military events, especially the defeat at Sabine Crossroads, were the principal object of inquiry, but running a very close second was the question of cotton-trading in all its ramifications. Perhaps of prime interest to the committee was the pass that Lincoln had given to Casey and Butler;[20] any evidence tending to reflect discredit on the administration was welcome. Also of interest to the committee were the stories of swarms of speculators accompanying the army and enjoying the assistance and protection of Banks. The appearance of "cotton speculators"—Frank Howe and others—on Banks's headquarters boat had set his staff to gossiping like a bevy of old women. A naval captain testified that he had been assured by speculators that the arrival of Governor (now Senator) Yates of Illinois in New Orleans was part of a scheme concocted by Yates and Banks to make the latter president. The plot, they said, called for raising a large slush fund by trading in cotton to enable Banks to beat out Lincoln in the Republican convention.[21] And so the testimony went, a cloud of rumors, suppositions, and second-hand stories.

When Admiral Porter was questioned on this subject, he gave free rein to that ease of expression and facility of invention that led him to take up the writing of novels after the war. He told the committee: "General Banks had come up on the steamer Black Hawk, loaded with cotton speculators, bagging, roping, champagne, and ice. The whole affair was a cotton speculation." "It was a well-understood thing that it was a big cotton raid." "Cotton killed that expedition, in my opinion." [22] Speculators were in control of the campaign, he said, and were under the patronage of Banks. Military operations

[20] For this episode see above, pp. 71–74.
[21] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 80–82, 291–92, 295, 302–303.
[22] *Ibid.,* pp. 270–72, 277.

were hamstrung because of the preoccupation with cotton. Then the questions turned to the navy's seizures of cotton. Well, of course, that was entirely different. He pictured the conduct of the navy as having been in strict accordance with law and honor, when in reality it was in accordance with neither. No, said the admiral, he did not seize cotton as prize of war. "It was seized as government cotton and sent to the courts, without any application on the part of the navy as prize at all," [23] a statement which was completely false. The rest of Porter's testimony was in a similar imaginative strain, and was all intended to convey the idea that as far as the navy was concerned everything was shipshape and aboveboard.

Actually the fleet's behavior in this matter was a bit more picturesque than the admiral was willing to admit. In marked contrast to the devious machinations of speculators, the navy's approach to the cotton question was as stimulating as a breath of the salt sea air. The policy of Porter and his men was refreshingly simple and direct: wherever cotton was found they seized it. It is, however, regrettable, though perhaps understandable, that the admiral's account of the fleet's activities in that line of endeavor did not partake of the same directness that so distinguished the actual operations, such as had caused the Confederates to bestow on him the *nom de guerre* "Thief of the Mississipppi." [24] He even found it necessary to protest to his aged mother that his cabin was not, as she had heard, "full of silver taken from the plantations." [25] With a reputation of this sort, it is not difficult to see why Porter did his utmost to put the cotton activities of Banks's forces in the worst possible light, while at the same time he ascribed to the navy a purity of motive and deed that would have warmed the heart of Parson Weems.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 272.
[24] E. A. Pollard, *The Third Year of the War* (New York, 1865), p. 249.
[25] Porter to Mrs. Porter, May 18, 1864, Porter Papers.

In his letters to Gideon Welles, in his testimony before a committee of Congress, and in his own writings, Porter wholly misrepresented the role of the navy. How intimately he himself was involved in cotton dealings, other than prize seizures, cannot be determined exactly. He piously told Welles that he "would not walk ten steps" out of his way for all the cotton in the South. "I am happy to say that I have never been afflicted with the mania, which has led some prominent men astray from more important duties." [26] Yet it seems to be a well-established fact that he carried with him on his flagship a speculator connected with Butler and Casey, one William Halliday. Porter used the power of his position to assist the latter in his operations, and Halliday in fact realized a fortune from his Red River venture.[27] Whether the admiral acted disinterestedly or whether he received some substantial compensation remains an unanswered question.[28]

Although the Wade committee had little difficulty in eliciting testimony that showed that the paramount responsibility for the defeat at Sabine Crossroads belonged to Banks, it was evidently considerably confused as to just what took place with respect to cotton-trading. When the committee wrote its final report, it merely said that the only fact definitely established concerning cotton speculation was that Lincoln had given Casey and Butler permits to go up the Red River and bring back cotton. This point was very heavily stressed. Otherwise

[26] *O. R. N.,* xxvi, 293 (Porter to Welles, May 11, 1864).

[27] *Com. Con. War,* pp. 293, 303–304. Porter may also have been involved with Phil. B. Fouke, Ben. F. Camp's partner. See *O. R. N.,* xxvi, 267.

[28] In all, about 6000 bales were sent from the Red River country to Cairo, Illinois, headquarters for the Mississippi Squadron. It was sent up the river specifically as prize of war, Porter's denial nothwithstanding; 1000 bales were reserved to meet possible claims by loyal owners, acknowledging the indisputable fact that the navy had seized the property of loyal Unionists. In the spring of 1865 the Supreme Court ruled that prize law did not apply to inland seizures. See *Com. Con. War,* pp. 272, 303–304; *O. R. N.,* xxvi, 35, 65, 244, 265–66, 298–99, 320–21; *Senate Exec. Doc.,* 40th Cong., 2d Sess., No. 56, p. 7; Harrington, *Banks,* p. 162; Morse, ed., *Welles Diary,* ii, 255.

the report excoriated Banks for his conduct of military affairs and denounced his holding of civil elections as a usurpation of authority that did not belong to the army. It was the sort of report that anyone could have foreseen from this committee, although some of the charges were painfully true.[29]

While the hearings were still going on, the administration failed to win congressional approval of the reconstructed government of Louisiana, all action being blocked for that session by Senator Charles Sumner. Early in April Lincoln sent Banks back to Louisiana to keep politics in that state under control, but before the general arrived, Lincoln was dead and Andrew Johnson had become president. On June 4 a reorganization of military departments resulted, obviously by design, in depriving Banks of his command. After living so many months in New Orleans it was hard to leave, and he lingered there through the summer. Finally in September he decided to leave the army, go back to Massachusetts, and try to resume his political career.[30]

This last trip up the Mississippi must have stirred many thoughts. Baton Rouge glided by, then Port Hudson, where he had received Gardner's surrender over two years before. And now on the left was the mouth of the Red River, with the broad expanse of Turnbull's Island stretching away to the west. Then that too slipped into the past.

[29] For the majority report see *Com. Con. War,* pp. iii–xv. A more objective report was written by Daniel W. Gooch, a minority of one (*ibid.,* pp. xvi–xliv). Gooch was from Massachusetts.

[30] Harrington, *Banks,* pp. 167–69.

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of the Butlers. Letters between Banks and his wife gave insight into the general's character. Among these papers is much military correspondence, as well as letters to and from Lincoln, but almost all of this material has been published in the *Official Records,* Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Lincoln,* and *Com. Con. War.* There were, however, a number of useful exceptions. Though not cited above, microfilms of the much smaller collection of Banks papers belonging to the Illinois State Historical Society were also examined, but they contained nothing relevant to the Red River campaign not available elsewhere.

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